Leading with Privilege:
Personal Journeys of White Male Leaders in Higher Education to Become Advocates for Diversity, Equity and Social Justice

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Abstract

With the growing participation of under-represented groups in American higher education, it is more important than ever that college presidents position diversity issues as a high priority on their leadership agenda. Given the continuing dominance of white males in college presidencies, it is especially important that white male leaders develop a greater awareness and understanding of diversity issues and the varying life experiences of different populations while also acknowledging and assessing the impact of their own personal identity and life experience on their leadership actions, practices and behavior. This study examines twenty white male presidents and chancellors who have established a reputation as effective advocates for diversity, equity and social justice. Findings from interviews with each president are compared with existing research to explore three key aspects: life experiences that inspired them to become involved in diversity issues; strategies and activities to develop greater awareness and understanding of diversity; and actions and strategies to develop successful diversity initiatives in their institution and community. In the end, this study documents ways that a white male leader can use his personal status as an asset in diversity work while at the same time actively working to acknowledge and address potential challenges of personal identity that may hinder efforts to ensure his institution provides access, equity and inclusion for all.

Table of Contents

Chapter I

Introduction

The United States entered the current millennium on a wave of growing diversity comparable to the social and cultural change brought about by the influx of immigrants in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (The Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, 2000). Significant demographic changes are underway in the American workforce: people of color make up 36% of the U.S. labor force; the percentage of women in the workforce grew from 30% in 1950 to nearly 50% in 2012, with women of color making up a third of that group; and gay and transgender workers represent 6% of today's workforce (Burns et al., 2012). A similar increase in diversity is evident in the demographics of higher education. By 2020, projections indicate that minority students will make up nearly half of the U.S. public high school graduates, primarily due to increased numbers of Latino and Asian graduates and decreasing numbers of white graduates (Lipka, 2014). Minority student enrollment in college is also growing: the percentage of black high school graduates going on to college increased 5% over the past decade and college enrollment of Latino high school graduates increased by 14%, while the level of white student college enrollment has remained steady (Lipka, 2014).

Given its significant impact on individual advancement, social change, and economic growth in the U.S., higher education has a responsibility to advance diversity, equity and social justice initiatives in order to respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students and stakeholders (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014). Institutions are increasing their focus on diversity and equity issues

to ensure access and inclusion for all and to demonstrate a growing commitment to the principle that diversity is critical to a successful democracy, a democratic workforce and the economic success of the nation (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014). The economic future of the U.S. is dependent on a globally competitive workforce made up of educated and culturally and racially aware people of all races and ethnicity (Kirwan, 2004) as well as genders, abilities, religions and social classes – and colleges and universities are expected to help develop this modern workforce now and in the extended future.

There is also growing recognition that *all* students benefit from increased diversity (Kirwan, 2004) - not only through positive intellectual and social outcomes in the classroom, but also from the impact of diversity on individual cognitive development, as indicated by Anderson (2008):

> The presence of minority students in a group of White students leads to a greater level of cognitive complexity. In addition, the racial diversity of a student's close friends and classmates has a greater impact on IC [integrative complexity] than does the diversity of the discussion group. This latter finding implies that prolonged contact may have a stronger effect on cognitive complexity than does singular or intermittent contact (p. 93).

The common perception that increased diversity results in losses or sacrifices for white people is consistently countered by research evidence and personal testimonials that document the benefits of diversity in life experiences for all people.

Diversity in Higher Education and in Society

While growing diversity presents new demands on higher education to serve a broader base of people, diversity is about more than demographics and numbers of students, faculty and staff on campuses. As Smith (2009) stated:

> Diversity is a powerful agent of change. Indeed, diversity is an imperative that must be embraced if colleges and universities are to be successful in a pluralistic and interconnected world . . . the dynamics of diversity are reshaping the world and its institutions with equal impact. Like technology, diversity offers significant opportunities to fulfill the mission of higher education and to serve institutional excellence, albeit in new ways (p. 3).

Diversity has the potential to act as a "powerful facilitator" that impacts an institution's mission, capacity and "the ways in which [institutions] are designed and function" (Smith, p. 3). The issue is not simply whether our campuses can become sufficiently diverse to mirror their social and cultural context. Rather than merely aspiring to mirror the social context of higher education, institutions must strive to model how embracing and institutionalizing diversity changes our campuses and higher education for the better.

The contemporary picture of diversity is quite complex, with multiple aspects ranging from demographics, to political and economic elements, to social and institutional policies and practices. For example, the increased diversity in the U.S. population is partly the result of the influx of immigrants and refugees from Asia, Mexico and Central America, and Africa, with each sub-population of newcomers having a strong desire to retain a cultural identity in their new home (Fredrickson, 2010; Smith, 2009). Multiple ethnic, religious and cultural identities are also present within each group,

magnifying the diversity of these new populations. In addition, political and economic components add greater complexity, with inequities driven by race, poverty and control over resources and opportunities increasing the potential for conditions that contribute to social and institutional instability (Smith, 2009). In short, higher education is not simply challenged to accommodate and include a wider variety of people - it faces new economic, political and social issues that require new thinking.

As the population of the United States becomes more diverse and the proportion of white people decreases, longstanding issues of racism, civil rights and white privilege often become more evident in the increasingly diverse contexts of higher education. Active engagement at a broad national level is critical to achieving genuine inclusion, requiring an intentional and deliberate effort driven by a sense of conscious social responsibility:

> The United States stands as perhaps the most racially and ethnically diverse country in the world. Its obligation to demonstrate both the power of diversity and the possibility of developing a pluralistic society that works is crucial in creating a model for what can be done (Smith, 2009, p. 10).

Colleges and universities must respond to diversity for reasons beyond the campus and curriculum, as the institutions serve as both models and proving grounds for new intellectual and social ideals and practices that can increase racial awareness and positively impact and change society (Trepagnier, 2006).

The Challenges and Opportunities of Diversity

Increased diversity in higher education can positively affect society in a number of ways. The opportunity to confront racism and educate people about the history of

white privilege and resulting racial and social injustices can directly impact the current experience and well-being of all members of the population: “Acknowledging a more accurate and just history has political and psychological value and is immensely powerful in the way it can directly and indirectly affect current experience” (Smith, 2009, p. 12). In contrast, failing to actively identify and confront racism puts institutions at risk of modeling passivity, “a noteworthy component in the production of institutional racism” (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 82). Establishing racially aware strategies on campuses can challenge color-blind policies just as increased educational access can help promote social and economic success for people of all races and genders.

Increased diversity can also affect the economics and business of higher education, influencing institutional behavior, performance, structure and offerings. Increased workforce diversity has proven to improve business performance through increased adaptability and innovation from “different ideas, more creativity, and superior solutions” (Herring, 2009, p. 219). While economic arguments frequently focus on the direct and indirect cost of accommodating diversity in a business or organization, increased diversity helps organizations “‘think outside the box’ by bringing previously excluded groups inside the box” (Herring, p. 220). Even the unavoidable conflict that can arise from increased diversity can be an advantage, as “conflict forces [groups] to go beyond the easy solutions common in like-minded groups. . . . homogeneity may lead to greater group cohesion but less adaptability and innovation” (Herring, 2009, p. 220). In addition, the cost of failing to develop a commitment to diversity can lead to a variety of serious issues, including lawsuits, public relations problems, staff turnover, and student attrition (Smith, 2009, p. 16).

Higher education must do more than hire and recruit a more diverse pool of people or aspire in principle to become more diverse. Each institution should actively strive to build its capacity to function as a diverse organization and create new internal structures and processes that meet the needs of both a more diverse society and the institution through a system of polices, practices and decisions that change "the way decisions are made, in how power is distributed, and in the characteristics of institutional culture" (Smith, 2009, p.18). Most important for this study, research indicates that higher education needs to achieve a significant degree of institutional change to play a lead role in promoting diversity, equity and social justice. This change will not come about without transformational leaders who are committed to this work within their institution and in their communities.

The Role of College and University Presidents

This study focuses on white male leaders in executive positions, such as president or chancellor, because they are in a position to play a key leadership role in the development and implementation of successful diversity initiatives that bring about institutional change (Anderson, 2008; Kezar, 2007, 2008; Pollard, 2004). Presidents are often drawn into the external and institutional politics that can challenge a diversity agenda and they have the potential to develop shared understanding of diversity issues, build support for solutions, and develop commitment to collective action (Crosby & Bryson, 2005, p. 129). Successful change efforts also require leaders who are adept at "constructing and communicating a compelling vision" (Crosby & Bryson, p. 263), bringing "to light what power and privilege obscures" (Crosby & Bryson, p. 112) to shape the presentation of public problems and inspire commitment to proposed solutions.

Presidents also have positional authority to enact diversity agendas through a variety of means: relating diversity to institutional mission; including diversity in strategic planning efforts and budget plans; encouraging institutional dialogue; forming committees; and modifying curriculum and institutional policies and processes (Kezar, 2008). In addition, presidents can play a key role in modeling leadership behavior and developing change strategies through personal efforts to connect with members of under-represented groups and by encouraging organizational learning about diversity issues (Kezar, 2007).

In the face of mounting expectations to respond to the growing diversity of our society, today's higher education leaders must find effective ways to meet the needs of all learners and cultivate a diverse and inclusive workplace and learning environment on their campuses. Diversity presents one of the highest profile issues in higher education in the last two decades (Anderson, 2008), yet "despite the intellectual grounding of equity that underscores the mission and vision of colleges and universities and the opportunity to exhibit transformational leadership, institutions and their leaders often struggle to successfully address the seemingly complex concept of diversity" (Anderson, p. 7). Given the positional influence of presidents, the importance of leadership in achieving successful diversity initiatives, and the growing pressure on higher education leaders to prioritize and address issues involving diversity, equity and social justice, scholars are focusing attention on leadership strategies, organizational priorities and decision-making, and engagement practices, including how a leader's identity influences their experiences, perceptions and applications of power (Chavez & Sanlo, 2013). In particular, developing an understanding of the intersection of leader identity and leadership practice is considered by some scholars to be critical to achieving the "greater self-knowledge"

necessary to become a transformative leader in today's increasingly diverse culture (Chavez & Sanlo, p. 3).

This study of white male leaders is especially relevant because current leadership demographics in higher education reflect a continuing racial and gender disparity that favors white males. The typical American college president today is a married white male who is sixty-one years old. Women hold only 26% of presidencies, and members of minority groups hold only 13% of the presidencies in the U.S. (Stripling, 2012). Due to the dominance of white male leaders in higher education today, it is especially important for these leaders to develop a greater awareness and recognition of their personal identity, along with a better understanding of how privilege associated with their identity can act as both a barrier and an asset for their leadership work with diversity initiatives.

Statement of the Problem

The over-representation of white males in presidential positions stands in sharp contrast to the growing diversity in higher education, raising some critical questions. How can white male leaders understand and effectively respond to the needs, concerns and interests of under-represented populations that make up a growing share of the higher education community? Furthermore, as individuals who may have little or no direct experience of oppression and exclusion based on identity, how can white male leaders understand and support the needs and interests of oppressed and marginalized groups - especially within a higher education culture and societal context that is based in part on a system of privilege that helped these white males achieve their leadership status?

This study explores how some white male leaders in higher education become "inclusive white male leaders" (or IWMLs) by developing an ability to act as leaders and

change agents within their institutions and communities on behalf of diversity, equity and social justice issues while working from a privileged position as white males. Demographic evidence documents that white males continue to be over-represented in higher education leadership even as our campuses become more and more diverse. The research literature also presents a strong case that white privilege, racism and sexism continue to exist in our society and these critical issues are present in our colleges and universities as well. The growing contrast between an increasingly diverse population of higher education stakeholders and the continued over-representation of white men in college and university leadership positions creates a strong possibility of a gap between the perceptions, knowledge and behavior of a large percentage of higher education leaders and the needs and interests of the diverse communities they serve.

These conflicting conditions indicate there is value in a research study that examines how a white male leader in higher education recognizes and makes sense of the contrast between his own privileged life experience and the challenges faced by marginalized groups and people of color. This study explores the various aspects of that issue and focuses on how some white male leaders address the inequities faced by a growing segment of the higher education community. Specifically, this study seeks to answer three questions:

1. What kind of life experiences influence white male leaders to become involved in diversity, equity and social justice work?
2. What types of strategies and activities help inclusive white male leaders develop awareness and understanding of how identity, race and privilege relate to their leadership behavior and practices?

3. What strategies and actions do inclusive white male leaders employ to address diversity, equity and social justice issues?

By exploring these three questions, this study provides insights into what motivates a select population of white male leaders to work for a greater good on behalf of others who are less privileged. The study also provides insight into how white male leaders find ways to better understand their own background and life experience to develop a greater capacity to act in support of diversity, equity and social justice. In addition, this study provides ways for institutions to select white male leaders who are better positioned to serve a more diverse group of stakeholders, along with identifying successful practices and strategies that can help a white male leader develop the necessary level of understanding to play an effective leadership role to address diversity, equity and social justice issues in his institution and community.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

While a wealth of research explores various aspects of the three research questions, I chose to focus on two bodies of scholarship as a foundation for this study. One area of research explores *life experience*, examining events, factors and conditions from an individual's life that create initial awareness, recognition and interests related to issues of diversity, race and privilege. A second area of research examines the *development of awareness and understanding of identity, race and privilege*, including a related question of how that understanding influences leadership behavior and practices and is converted into action to support diversity, equity and social justice.

These two aspects of a leader's personal development interact, often in a non-linear manner. Experiences can lead to new awareness and understanding, and efforts to build awareness can provide new experiences; the combined process encourages personal growth and conscious efforts to initiate change in the self as well as in and with other people. This process also creates a critical relationship between a leader's work to achieve personal change and his leadership efforts to initiate organizational change within his institution. This study explores how personal life experiences influence white male leaders to develop a greater awareness and understanding of race and privilege that brings about significant personal change and motivates them to act as change agents for diversity, equity and social justice in their higher education leadership role.

Life Experience

Among the extensive research that has examined the impact of life experience on personal development, several specific types of studies are most relevant to the

development of inclusive white male leaders. First and foremost is research on the connection between life experience and the general development of the self, including aspects of self-knowledge, self-schemas, identity and self. There is also a body of relevant research that focuses on specific periods and points of time within the life span that present potential 'windows' for greater impact on the development of identity and self as well as changes in behavior, interests, goals and ambitions. A third key area of research examines the use of personal narrative as it relates to life experience and identity development, and a fourth area of research considers an overall framework for development of a sense of self and life path from the past, to the present and into the future.

Development of Self

A great deal of research exists related to general theories of how life experience influences an individual. The research clearly documents the dominant influence of interactions with others as a key factor in the impact of life experience. While solo life experiences, such as training alone and completing a marathon race, can have a major influence on an individual's life and identity, the majority of impactful life experiences typically involve some form of interaction or comparison with other people (Bruner, 1995; Erikson, 2007; Markus, 2010; Markus & Nurius, 1986; McKinney, 2005). In addition, research offers consistent evidence that life experience plays a key role in the development of identity and self; it also provides a conscious framework for perceptions and interpretations of one's past, impacts understanding of the present, and positions how a person defines their goals and expectations of the future.

Prior to the 1980s, research on self-knowledge (Langer et al, 1978; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) dismissed any conscious influence of life experience on thoughts and actions and considered individuals to be generally unaware of the sources and influences of their behavior. This theory was challenged by Markus' view that self-knowledge involves conscious preferences, values, goals, motives, rules and strategies that regulate individual behavior and provide "an interpretive framework for making sense of past behavior" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955). According to Markus (1983), self-knowledge develops from a creative and conscious selection of information gathered from life experiences that produce self-schemas, or "knowledge structures about the self" (p. 547). These self-schemas (or schemata) develop around significant aspects of self derived from social interactions and constructed "creatively and selectively from past experiences in a particular domain" to reflect personal concerns of "enduring saliences and investment" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955).

While self-schemas are based in part on past actions, according to Markus, they can also influence present and future behavior. Self-schemas define aspects of an individual's life or environment that an individual believes they should control as "a claim of responsibility for one's present and future behavior", areas of personal interest that can evolve into "an enduring concern" and affect how an individual behaves in that aspect of their life (Markus, 1983, p. 549). From this theoretical perspective, self-schemas can affect both present and future behavior in related areas of interest and activity, providing evidence that life experience is related to "dynamic and future-anchored properties of the self" (Markus, 1983, p. 554). In the context of this study, it is reasonable to assume that self-schemas present a strong potential influence on the

development of inclusive white male leaders and their later interest and engagement in diversity, equity and social justice work.

Markus' research also included possible selves theory, a concept with roots in related theories on personality and identity that date as far back as the work of William James and Sigmund Freud as well as subsequent research by Rogers (1959) and Gordon (1968), more contemporary research by Levinson (1986) and the work of symbolic interactionists who viewed the self as organizing behavior by "always anticipating, always oriented to the future" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 956). Markus' development of possible selves theory began with two surveys of college students, first exploring "what is possible for you" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 9) and then examining aspects of possibility within the self-concept of college students. In both studies, the subjects considered forms of possible selves that were often quite different from their current self. In fact, their possible selves were not restricted by their current self and in many cases revealed a great degree of anticipated change (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Markus and Nurius' (1986) interpretation of past research and analysis of the results of their own studies produced a theory that possible selves function as "personalized carriers" of general aspirations and motives that act as incentives for future behavior and provide a context for evaluating and interpreting the current self (p. 955). Possible selves were also related to an individual's life experience as the result of past social comparisons "where thoughts, feelings, characteristics and behaviors were contrasted with those of salient others" (p. 954), indicating a potential influence of mentors and role models on the development of identity and possible selves. While an individual can develop any form of possible selves, choices appeared to stem from an

"individual's particular sociocultural and historical context and from the models, images and symbols provided by the media and by the individual's immediate social experiences" (p. 954). Possible selves can also "give specific cognitive form to our desires for mastery, power, or affiliation", including specific plans and strategies for achieving a possible self as well as goals and motives embedded in self-knowledge conceived in especially "vivid" terms (p. 960).

Erikson (2007) further developed possible selves theory through a comprehensive critique of related research grounded in the concepts of Markus (1983) and Markus and Nurius (1986). Erikson stressed the importance of three key issues in Markus' theory: the concept of self; motivation; and social and cultural-based meaning that we use to interpret the world, with self acting as the link between motivation and the social and cultural context (Erikson, 2007, p. 348). Erikson's version of possible selves theory also emphasized a number of specific elements, including experienced meaning, relationship to self-concept, social/cultural context, agency and narratives.

While Markus and Nurius (1986) indicated that possible selves play an important role in "making actions meaningful" (Erikson, 2007, p. 354), Erikson emphasized the link between possible selves and meaning: "whereas schemata are manifest in the construction of experience, possible selves are manifest as experienced meaning" (p. 354), especially through "the narrative nature of possible selves" (p. 356). Erikson also proposed that the current view of self is "enormously influenced" by beliefs about what will happen to the individual in the future (p. 353). Since self-schemas are considered in part to be predictors of future behavior (Markus, 1977), questions arise regarding the relationship between possible selves and self-schemas – which Erikson described as a

reciprocating arrangement, with each influencing the other. Self-schemas involve general knowledge about the self, whereas possible selves are "specific instantiations" based in specific knowledge about future situations (Erikson, p. 354). Erikson also perceived self-schemas as vital to forming possible selves, with possible selves constituting "a specific class of experienced imaginations of future situations" (p. 354).

Erikson connected meaning in possible selves to social and cultural context, especially in reference to Bruner's (1995) model of meaning making and views of *intersubjectivity*, which he defined as "how we understand events, interactions, and expressions as being shared with other people" (Erikson, 2007, p. 354). Because "possible selves are largely about situations in which we interact with others" (Erikson, p. 354), Erikson proposed that possible selves are influenced heavily by intersubjectivity via social interactions and communication that depend on a mutual understanding:

> Without our assumptions about intersubjectivity, phenomena such as role expectations, anticipated shame, or anticipated rewards would be meaningless because they are based on the assumption that we can understand each other and that others relate to what we do or do not do (p. 354-355).

For white male leaders in higher education, possible selves can be based in an actual and imagined context of relationships and interactions with others, dependent on assumed mutual understanding with others to create meaning and significance for a role that a possible self will play in a future leadership situation.

Erikson (2007) also emphasized the importance of agency and narrative in the development and function of possible selves. Possible selves not only serve as a projection of a future version of the self, they also often include some form of acting as

an agent in a future situation – distinguishing possible self from a simple life task, hope or fear (Erikson, 2007). While Markus and Nurius (1986) viewed agency "in terms of the individual's ability to create and elaborate distinct possible selves" (p. 962), Erikson proposed that "an experience of agentic qualities" is part of the phenomenon of a possible self and suggested "agency is a distinct quality of possible selves" (p. 352). Furthermore, Erikson described possible self as experiencing how a future state would be "from the inside" of the individual "as a living, acting human," making each person's possible selves experience unique and personal (p. 352).

Agency is also linked to an element of narrative and this aspect of Erikson's theory was influenced in part by Bruner's (1991, 1995) work on life narrative theory. Bruner (1991) asserted that "we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative" (p. 4), with narrative organizing "the structure of human experience" (p. 21). Rather than providing a factual account of life experience, narrative offers a "version of reality" (Bruner, p. 4) that contains some "measure of agency", which involves some form of individual freedom and choice (p. 7). In contrast to Markus, Erikson (2007) presented a more future-oriented view of narrative, described as a set of behaviors, and their causes and results, with an end state "described as an event" (p. 355). These elements form a "narrative plot" (or plots) that tell a story – often to ourselves – about the self acting in a projected future situation (Erikson, p. 355). Erikson (2007) made a point to emphasize that a possible self is not just an abstract conviction about a desired or likely future state – it also involves a form of anticipated agency in a future situation for the self, often with a conscious narrative and plan to achieve that future state.

Timing of Life Experience

Other related research on the impact of life experience on development of identity and self focuses on specific periods in one's life span. Bornstein (1989) explored basic aspects of a phenomenon of life experience identified as "sensitive periods" and documented in studies of a variety of living organisms. Sensitive periods are a point or phase in development when an experience or influence can have a significant impact primarily because of when it occurs in the process of physical and/or psychological development. Bornstein particularly emphasized critical aspects of key sensitive period experiences that include specificity of the experience, features of the experience, and sources of the experience (p. 183). During sensitive periods, experiences can dramatically affect development at the time of the incident, but most importantly, the effects of experiences during this critical period can have a future or later impact that is equal or even greater than at the time when the event took place. For example, studies show that nervous system changes in animals developed during a sensitive period "will systematically influence behavior long after the sensitive period has closed" (Bornstein, p. 186).

Palus et al (1991) also focused on segments of life experience, examining the relationship between specific points in one's life span and narrative aspects of identity as a way to assess executive personality and executive performance. Identity, according to Palus et al, is "a personal sense of one's location with respect to the possibilities of life; frequently expressed as 'I am (this)'", including aspects of both possibility and aspiration (p. 4). Palus et al also asserted that people often revise elements of their life story to facilitate "identity transitions" that typically occur during "periods of heightened

opportunity" in the adult life span when an individual is able to confront and revise their identity (p. 8). A classic example of this phenomenon is "seasonal review", when many people engage in reflection at "natural points for life review" when they are particularly susceptible to changes, such as the midlife transition point around the age of forty (p. 9).

Bennis and Thomas (2002) conducted relevant research that focused on specific life events linked to changes in leader identity and behavior. Interviews with forty public and private leaders revealed a consistent presence of "intense, often traumatic, always unplanned experiences" that significantly affected leaders and made them aware of their leadership abilities (Bennis & Thomas, 2002, p. 3). These experiences - termed *crucibles* - were described as "a transformative experience through which an individual comes to a new or an altered sense of identity", producing a clearer sense of themselves as well as their role and place in the world (p. 3). In nearly every case, the leaders reported a significant personal transformation from their crucible experience that also often included a narrative story created around the event. Some examples from the study include the impact of Marine training in World War II on Common Cause founder John W. Gardner; the anti-Semitic experiences in college experienced by architect Frank Gehry; and the tragic incident of an employee death in a manufacturing plant under the leadership of Jeff Wilke, "an experience that taught him that leadership was about much more than making quarterly numbers" (p. 8). These personal trials prompted "deep self-reflection that forced [leaders] to question who they were and what mattered to them" and inspired an examination of personal values and assumptions (p. 3).

In addition, Bennis and Thomas (2002) identified four essential skills of great leaders connected to each leader's ability to produce meaning from a crucible experience:

the ability to engage others in shared meaning; a distinctive and compelling voice; a sense of integrity and a strong set of values; and an adaptive capacity, or what they termed "applied creativity – an almost magical ability to transcend adversity with all its attendant stresses, and to emerge stronger than before" (p. 8). The concept of applied creativity was also connected to two personal qualities: hardiness in the form of "perseverance and toughness," and an ability to grasp context that involved an ability to weigh multiple factors to understand different views and put a situation in perspective (p. 8). These two qualities, according to Bennis and Thomas, not only allowed a leader to survive their crucible experience, but to also learn from it and become "stronger, more engaged, and more committed than ever" (p. 8).

Kendall (2006) extended Bennis and Thomas' crucible theory to explain how some white people begin to question their white social status and engage in change efforts for diversity, equity and social justice. Kendall proposed that crucible experiences act as key drivers that affect a white person's sense of identity and encourage personal change, producing a new identity, awareness, and desire to initiate social change in their environment. Kendall especially stressed the importance of white people forming personal relationships with oppressed people to develop a genuine compassion for others and initiate an understanding of the experiences and challenges of non-privileged groups.

McKinney (2005) also emphasized the importance of life experience with specific regard to understanding white identity, focusing on "turning points" and "epiphanies" as "specific watershed experiences" that influence an individual's identity, self and perception of their place in the world (p. 7). For example, McKinney observed that "the first time a white person finds her or himself in the minority can serve as a turning-point

experience" (p.20), demonstrating how "moments of becoming conscious of whiteness, or race and racism" can help a person begin to develop a new understanding of "what it means to be white" (p. 24). Because context is a key factor in turning point experiences, travel or "geographical displacement" can provide a life experience that puts an individual in a new setting, at times positioning a person as a minority for the first time to cause them to question their established identity and "view whiteness or race in a new way" (p. 41).

McKinney (2005) also emphasized that turning points differ for white people in comparison to people of color: "Whites seldom have their race brought to their attention through discrimination – race only becomes meaningful and racial identities significant, under unusual circumstances" (p. 72-73). Referring to Helms' (1984, 1995) white racial identity development model, McKinney asserted that a "personally jarring" life event (McKinney, p. 12) is often a key factor in moving a white person from the reintegration stage marked by hostility "toward Blacks" and a bias in favor of his own racial group, to the pseudo-independent stage of "intellectual acceptance and curiosity about Blacks and Whites" (Helms, 1984, p. 156). McKinney also observed that racial turning points for white people are often initially "about awareness of the plight of others" and later bring about an understanding of the system of racism and white privilege that is responsible for the injustice faced by people of color (p. 73). Most important, McKinney proposed that a racial turning point experience for white people is "a luxury, a privilege of whiteness" (p. 73). It is important to note that inclusive white male leaders often have the option of avoiding or ignoring these types of situations due to their privileged position; the ability to make a voluntary choice to become involved in race and whiteness issues is the result

of privileged status. Furthermore, according to McKinney, the decision to exercise that right of choice can actually perpetuate systemic white privilege by making race recognition a choice of a privileged individual (p. 73-74).

Murphy and Johnson (2011) also considered the concept of sensitive periods with specific regard to leadership development, focusing on early life experiences that significantly impact adulthood by providing the beginnings of personal leadership qualities (p. 459). Basing their work in Borstein's (1989) theory of sensitive periods of development, they described sensitive periods as "periods of one's life when crucial lessons occur at a time when skills and awareness develop more easily and rapidly", setting the stage for future leadership development even if the impact is not visible at the time of the early life experience (Murphy & Johnson, p. 460). These critical periods typically occur early in life when the greatest degree of growth and change takes place in four main developmental stages identified by Santrock (2010): early childhood to age six; middle and late childhood, through elementary school; early and late adolescence through the teenage years; and early adulthood, including college years and early employment (Murphy & Johnson, p. 465). What occurs in a life experience, according to Murphy and Johnson, is not as critical as *when* the experience occurs, as life experiences have greater impact on leadership identity and development if they occur during a sensitive period (p. 466). In addition, when these experiences are recalled during a present moment by a leader is also a significant factor in terms of the relationship between past life events and leadership outcomes.

Each of the above studies and theories suggest the potential significance of specific points in the life history of inclusive white male leaders as key influences on

their later decisions to become actively involved in diversity, equity and social justice issues. The concept of "sensitive periods" (Bornstein, 1989) also proposes that the specific nature or focus of a life experience may not be as critical as when it occurs in a leader's life – introducing a variable of chance rather than a situation of direct cause and effect. For example, a specific type of life experience may influence an individual leader to develop an interest in diversity issues, whereas a similar life experience may not have the same effect on another white male leader. The difference may be due to *when* the experience took place in an individual leader's personal development rather than based solely on a different personal response to the event itself.

Another interesting aspect of this area of research involves how a life experience provides an influence later in a leader's life. Bornstein (1989) showed that the impact of an influential life experience could be greater at a later point in life than at the time of the actual event. Murphy and Johnson (2011) demonstrated that the moment and conditions when life experiences are recalled could play a key role in the degree of impact of a life event on leadership behavior. Palus et al (1991) noted instances of "heightened opportunity" when leaders use dynamic and multiple versions of a life story to facilitate "identity transitions" that allow them to confront identity issues and implement changes (p. 7). Bennis and Thomas' (2002) crucible theory and McKinney's (2005) theory of turning points also described specific life events that present key challenges to a leader's sense of identity and self, motivating a leader to engage in deep reflection that questions their identity and values and produces a new sense of self with a revised perspective of their place in the world. Each of these research findings highlight the presence of key points of opportunity for personal change during the course of an IWML's life. They

suggest that not only are life experiences influential in terms of specific lessons or information, they can also be deliberately recalled and used selectively by IWMLs to conform to later situations or to facilitate and support conscious development of a new identity derived from a revised life story.

Personal Narrative

Several studies of the impact of life experience on personal development focus on how individuals actively develop a personal life narrative to make sense of their life experiences as well as to connect past experiences with their present situation or future aspired states and goals. Erikson's (2007) emphasis on agency and narrative, for example, provides a link between possible selves theory and the use of personal narrative for identity development and personal reference to guide leadership decisions and behavior. The concept of agency considers the extent to which leaders consciously envision an active role for themselves as an agent for change in a future life experience. For the purposes of this study, the concept of narrative can relate to an IWML forming a life story that involves a goal or end state focused on achieving a desired diversity goal or an aspect of justice for the leader to accomplish for his self and/or for his institution and community.

As described above, Palus et al (1991) asserted that individuals often present their identities in the form of a "serial narrative" focused on the self that involves a dynamic set of multiple versions of a life story (p. 5). Particular emphasis is often placed on revision of elements of a life story to facilitate an "identity transition" that typically occurs during "periods of heightened opportunity" when an individual is well positioned for "confronting one's identity and for making revisions within one's life-story or

identity" (Palus et al, p. 7). In addition, Palus et al emphasized the significance of "experiential life review", a new look at the self to consciously challenge an existing aspect of identity and create a possible identity change by "reflective reworking of the life story" (p. 7).

Shamir and Eilam (2005) also examined the creation of a life narrative as a key means of connecting life experience to the development of leaders with a focus on authentic leadership. They combined a "speculative review" of existing research with a narrative method to analyze leaders' life stories as a way to view leaders' descriptions of their lives as "lenses through which to access meaning attributed to life experience" (Shamir & Eilam, p. 403). They asserted that authentic leaders acquire leadership characteristics "by constructing, developing and revising their life-stories" to create a "meaning system" to interpret reality and give their interpretations and actions a personal meaning (p. 396). These constructed life stories provide a "source of self-knowledge and self-concept clarity", with a leader's identity and self-knowledge "organized in the form of life stories that express the storyteller's identities – products of the relationship between life experiences and the organized stories of these experiences" (p. 402).

According to Shamir and Eilam (2005), the leaders' personal narratives *are* their past, present and future identities, "created, told, revised and retold through-out life" to form connections between life events and create systematic understanding (p. 402). More importantly, they emphasized that a leader's passion and commitment to a change agenda is directly tied to values formed by one's life experience, suggesting links between IWML behavior and moral and ethical aspects of their life events. Furthermore, these life stories are "constructed, not just remembered" (p. 405), creating a "storied construction

of reality" that has less to do with facts and more to do with selected elements of life experience that "confer meaning on the events that may not have had as much or any meaning at the time" when the events actually took place (p. 406). Shamir and Eilam also stressed learning from role models in the life stories - not in imitation of others, but as an evolving self-concept and process of self-clarification that begins with a "vague self-identity" (p. 407). The constructed stories also provide a "meaning system for actions" (p. 408) that guides leaders through a requisite process of reflective thinking to "draw lessons from experience" in a process that requires active reflection (p. 410).

While these forms of personal narrative help individual leaders make sense of their life experiences to understand the development of their own identity and self, some leaders also employ a form of collective narrative aimed at helping a campus community better understand the evolution of their institutional culture in regard to diversity and social justice issues. Crosby and Bryson (2005) stressed the importance of storytelling by leaders that focuses on the presentation of a collective "communal story" that conveys a "compelling public vision" linking past, present and future (p. 263). The communal stories help followers consider "what should be preserved and what should be created . . . illuminating problems and their cause, while projecting feasible and inspiring solutions for a better collective future" (p. 263). Effective stories often combine powerful visual images with solid empirical data to establish messages that are "consistent, testable and actionable, and lead to a morally acceptable position", yet do not "overshadow passion of vision" (p. 264). In addition, leaders were advised to spread their vision through a variety of media, with both a public relations and an education strategy to position their message in the mind of followers and the public to "raise consciousness, show how solutions will

alleviate the problem and promote a better society and respond to outcries from opponents" (p. 264).

Other research actively examined the life narratives of successful leaders to consider their impact on leadership practices and behavior. Ligon, et al (2008) studied 120 biographies of important twentieth century leaders, examining their life narratives for key events that directly relate to later aspects of an individual's leadership style and career path. While established views of the relationship between life experience and leadership success emphasize the importance of actual early life experiences, Ligon et al focused on life narratives, or life stories, selectively developed from life experience to produce "an economic summary of life's experiences" – related events that combine emotion and cognition to make sense of a span of life events (p. 314). These life narratives provide leaders with a way to communicate a personal understanding of their lives in regard to their present state, according to Ligon et al, often captured through themes or underlying principles that "bind causes, outcomes and events together" (p. 314).

Ligon et al (2008) found that the ability or interest in developing the necessary "autobiographical reasoning" to create a life narrative typically emerges in late childhood and adolescence, with events occurring in adolescence "related statistically to instances of greatness in leadership and creativity" (p. 314) – as demonstrated, for example, in Simonton's (2006) studies that linked early childhood and adolescent performance and accomplishments with achievement of the office of President of the United States. Ligon et al also identified six different types of significant life events**.** *Originating events* and *turning points* "mark the beginning of a new life plan" for an individual and relate to the

creation of future goals and plans to achieve those goals. Originating events are less specific in nature, while turning points are "concrete episodes that suddenly revise a life direction", changing existing plans and motivating new or future actions (p. 315). *Anchoring events* create a "foundation for a belief system", defining "how the world works and one's place in it" and identifies what is to be valued or avoided – forming a mental model and memory resource to "continually ground beliefs and values" (p. 315). *Analogous events* present circumstances that "trigger a memory of a structurally similar past event" and influence decisions in a related situation, often much later in life (p. 315). *Redemption* events involve negative events that provide a positive impact later in life to motivate and guide decisions, while *contaminating* events involve experiences with "apparent emotional positive attributes, serving later as potent reminders of failure" (p. 315).

A Developmental Framework of Life Experience

The focus of this study is most closely aligned with a study of life experiences of white college administrators by Latino (2010). Using a critical race theory frame, Latino studied the lives of inclusive white leaders by focusing on whiteness and personal racial identity as two key aspects of self to consider: "What life experiences contributed to their success?" (p. 9). Through interviews with eleven senior- and middle-level inclusive white college administrative leaders, Latino explored the connections of their racial reality, racial knowledge about the construction of whiteness, and their personal racial identity to "the context and life history, personal identity (sense of self), and worldview" of the subjects in the study (p. 13). Latino produced an "inclusive leadership framework" based on three "overarching categories ": *developmental phases*, or different levels of

inclusive leadership achieved by a leader; *processe*s that contribute to a leader's transition between each developmental phase; and *transformative life experiences* that affect personal growth that occurs between the four *developmental* phases (Latino, p. 96).

The developmental phases begin with the phase of *normalizing inclusiveness* that focuses on normalizing messages that socialize white people in reference to race and their personal racial identity:

> Through the normalizing inclusiveness phase, the discourse process on race was either focused only on people of color or not discussed at all. For many of the WILs [white inclusive leaders], race was not explicitly discussed in their families or was only discussed in reference to people who were not identified as White, which constructed Whiteness (sub-phase) as the invisible norm. . . . the concept of difference further perpetuated Whiteness and their personal racial identity as the norm within United States culture. White individuals used difference to normalize the construction of Whiteness and their own White racial identity (Latino, 2010, pp. 101-102).

The second phase – *performing inclusiveness* – involves "the professional expectations set forth by leadership, specifically the CDO" (Chief Diversity Officer) regarding Inclusive Excellence and included "minimal, if any, dialogue about their personal racial identity" (p. 121). *Embracing inclusiveness*, the third phase, involves recognition "that Whiteness was a social construction in the United States"; through "transformative life experiences that connected the mind with the heart", the leaders "developed an emotional/personal connection to the importance of inclusiveness" (p. 144). The final stage – *living inclusiveness* – reconstructs whiteness as "grounded in

inclusiveness, as a culture of habit in their daily lives, both personally and professionally" (p. 163).

Each of the four transitional processes identified by Latino - discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making and praxis - occur at each developmental phase to promote transformation and move toward inclusiveness (Latino, 2010, p. 95-96). *Discourse* involves intentional engagement in dialogue about inclusiveness; *self-reflexivity* is centered on personal "continuous reflection" on beliefs and professional practices; and in *meaning-making*, leaders "revisited their historical context to make new meaning with their current and future practice" (p. 95). In the fourth and arguably the most important process in terms of bringing about change, *praxis* involves a process of critical race reflection and subsequent action that helps white leaders "recognize how their racial privilege was masked in good intentions" (Latino, p. 136). As leaders moved toward more inclusive phases of leadership, according to Latino, inclusive white leaders experienced the four transition processes in a "more intentional way", moving from a "perception of something they were required to do" (in developmental phases one and two: normalizing and performing inclusiveness) to "the belief that inclusiveness was the right thing to do (phase three: embracing inclusiveness) and eventually became an inherent part of their being" in phase four: living inclusiveness (Latino, p. 140).

The third category in Latino's (2010) inclusive leadership framework focuses on *transformative life experiences*, described by Latino as significant influences on the growth and development of the inclusive white leaders as they transitioned between developmental phases (p. 141), motivating leaders "to continue to grow and learn as they strove toward embracing and living inclusiveness on a daily basis" (p. 96). These key

life experiences caused individuals to become "more purposeful in engaging in the processes" of discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, and praxis "as a means to better understand how their personal identities were connected to their practice as inclusive leaders" (p. 141). Latino also identified three main themes in these key life experiences: exposure; intersections of identity; and mentors or personal relationships (p. 96). *Exposure* to racial diversity in a variety of contexts influenced a leader's "understanding of racial difference", while *intersections of identity* brought about "recognition and understanding of discrimination." Through direct personal experiences related to an aspect of a leader's identity (such as class, appearance or sexual orientation), a leader "learned that connecting the mind with the heart was critical to achieving inclusive leadership" (p. 96-97). Experiences with *mentors* or other forms of personal relationships involved interactions with other individuals who "inspired a more inclusive racial worldview" (p. 97).

Considering the similarities between my study and Latino's (2010) research, it is essential to clarify the differences. Latino's study was more specific in its focus on two key aspects of self - whiteness and personal racial identity - and it examined the life experiences that contributed to the successful development of inclusive white college administrators. In addition, Latino's study was limited to a focus on race and included men and women subjects at middle and high administrative level positions working at one institution. In contrast, while my study includes consideration of awareness of race and privilege, it focuses on white male leaders who are leaders at the top executive level at different institutions, and with a potential focus on issues beyond race – such as involvement in rights for women or people with disabilities, for example. In addition,

while Latino focused primarily on the influence of life experience, that aspect is only the focus of the first stage of my study, followed by an examination of the personal growth activities used by white male leaders to develop their awareness and understanding of race and privilege as well as strategies to convert awareness into action.

Overall, my study differs from Latino's in its focus on white male presidents instead of white college administrators. It also explores a broader change process that begins with consideration of life experiences as key drivers of efforts to develop awareness of race and privilege, then moves on to examine the process of conscious personal change efforts and the leadership actions by white male leaders to address diversity, equity and social justice issues.

Development of Racial Awareness and Action

In addition to examining how life experiences of inclusive white male leaders (IWMLs) influence their interest in and motivation related to diversity, equity and social justice issues, it is also important to explore how IWMLs develop a greater understanding of race and privilege and in turn develop the capacity to achieve success in their activist work for diversity, equity and inclusion. A review of the research on white privilege begins with the landmark personal reflection essay by McIntosh (1988a) that helped focus attention on critical issues related to race and privilege. McIntosh initially studied white male dominance as an outcome of women's studies work on male privilege and observed that males rarely exhibit distress about "systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance" (McIntosh, p. 15). The recognition of male privilege created a corresponding awareness of white privilege, leading McIntosh to document forty-six examples of daily experiences where she was awarded unearned benefits from simply

being a white person. Recognizing male and white privilege also brought about consideration of aspects of privilege beyond race and gender, including age, ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation, as examples of instances when dominant groups enjoy a "daily experience" of advantage (McIntosh, p. 16). McIntosh (1988b) described these advantages as interlocking and advocated for intersectional analyses of the distinct and combined effects of various forms of privilege in order to fully understand privilege and oppression.

McIntosh emphasized that privilege is awarded to individuals regardless of their awareness or conscious manipulation of the benefits of privilege - "obliviousness" to the advantages of privilege is part of the American culture to "maintain the myth of meritocracy" that hides the fact that privilege is an essential factor in determining opportunity, access and success (McIntosh, 1988a, p. 18). McIntosh (1988b) described these benefits awarded to males and white people as occurring in two ways: *visible* privilege actively present in policies, practices and behaviors, and *embedded* privilege that privileged individuals are conditioned to not recognize or acknowledge. Visible privilege, for example, is present when a white person receives priority attention over people of color in a shared setting, such as service in a restaurant or store, while embedded privilege occurs, for example, when white people are approved for home loans at a higher rate of acceptance than people of color. The system of privilege is perpetuated in part because males are taught to not recognize male privilege and white people are taught to view racism only as a practice that puts others at a disadvantage, ignoring the "corollary aspect" of privilege that puts white individuals in a position of advantage over people of color (McIntosh, 1988a, p. 1).

McIntosh's writings on privilege provides a foundation of core ideas and questions relevant to a study of the awareness and behavior of white male leaders in higher education in regard to diversity, equity and social justice issues. Do inclusive white male leaders show greater concern about whether aspects of their life and career path are due to advantages of race and gender as well as their individual effort and merit? Do they actively consider how they have personally benefited from race and gender privilege in their life, career and daily activities? Do they recognize how the benefits of race and gender act as barriers to others who are not white males, both within their campus and in the broader community? To what extent are white male leaders aware of and actively addressing visible and embedded forms of privilege in their own leadership behavior and the policies and practices of their campus community?

Weber (1998) expanded on McIntosh's (1988b) concept of "interlocking" privilege by defining race, class, gender and sexuality as "systems of inequality" that benefit some while limiting others (p. 13). Weber acknowledged the significance of research on race, class, gender and sexuality dating back to the mid-1980s but noted that the growing number of anthologies of individual research on these topics failed to identify "the themes and assumptions that pull these diverse perspectives together" and offered "little guidance about what constitutes a race, class, gender, and sexuality analysis of social reality" (p. 14). The collective body of research also did not present "competing theories about the nature of race, class, gender, and sexual hierarchies" (Weber, p. 15), nor did it propose a "single unifying theory of the dynamics of these processes" (p. 16). To correct this perceived gap in the literature, Weber reviewed the body of research and identified six common themes as "systems of oppression" (p. 16):

contextual oppression, socially constructed oppression, power relationships, social structural (macro) and social psychological (micro) oppression, simultaneously expressed oppression, and interdependence of knowledge and activism.

A *contextual* system of oppression views race, class, gender and sexuality as dynamic, contextual-based hierarchies "influenced by economic, political and ideological processes, trends and events" (Weber, 1998, p. 16) that discourage definition of common meanings. *Socially constructed* oppression views race, class, gender and sexuality as dynamic social constructions that exist "both at the level of social institutions and at the level of personal identity" (Weber, p. 20). These constructs do not represent "fixed, static traits of individuals" and they are "deeply embedded in the practices and beliefs that make up our major social institutions" and act as "major organizing principles of society and of personal identity" (p. 20). Systems of *power relationships* view race, class, gender and sexuality as "historically specific, socially constructed hierarches of domination" (p. 20) based in individual groups exercising power over others through control of significant resources, in turn putting group membership at the heart of social conflict. *Social structural and psychological* oppression refers to how race, class, gender and sexual orientation impacts people at a micro-level of their individual daily life and at a macro-level in terms of their position in the broader social context of their community and institutional settings. Race and gender power relations, for example, are reflected in key micro-conditions of individual wealth, employment, housing and health as well as in statistical analysis of population groups. At a macro level, "barriers of oppression" are present in material and psychological conditions that affect individual and group well-being and provide dominant group members with a more positive identity experience and

a greater sense of self-respect as members of the model social group (Weber, p. 22). *Simultaneously expressed* oppression refers to the simultaneous impact of the constructs of race, class, gender and sexuality that provide or limit power and opportunity in every social situation, with social hierarchy systems embedded in social institutions and individual identities developed in response to social location in dominant and/or subordinate groups. The last theme – *interdependence of knowledge and activism* – is most relevant to this study, as it relates to how people can understand oppression by viewing their own social group experiences in a way that can "effectively define, value, and empower" them to work for social justice (Weber, p. 25).

Racial Identity

Other relevant research examined specific issues of racial identity. Helms (1984, 1995) conducted an initial informal survey of racial consciousness of "White friends and colleagues" (Helms, 1984, p. 151) that ultimately produced a five-stage white racial consciousness model spanning an initial stage of *contact* to a final stage of *autonomy*. The *contact* stage occurs when a white person is "largely unaware of himself or herself as a racial being" (Helms, 1984, p. 156) and "becomes aware that Black people exist" (p. 155). In the *disintegration* stage, a white person "is forced to acknowledge that he or she is White" (p. 156), often coupled with guilt or depression from the accompanying awareness of racism. Attempts to resolve anxieties related to acknowledging racism leads to the *reintegration* stage, when white people can develop overt or covert racist attitudes, fear and anger, and "a tendency to stereotype" (p. 156). Individuals remain in this stage until social pressure creates interactions with black people or the individual resolves those feelings on their own to enter the p*seudo*-

independence stage marked by "an intellectual acceptance and curiosity about Blacks and Whites" (p. 156). The final stage of *autonomy* occurs when an individual is "no longer merely knowledgeable about racial differences and similarities; he or she accepts them" and interactions with black people actively occur through a valuing of racial diversity and an attitude of "appreciation and respect" (p. 156).

Helms (1995) modified her initial theory of racial identity development to propose a more dynamic process of non-linear statuses for the five developmental phases of the model. Helms also asserted that all individuals experience some form of a racial identity development process and contended that power differences within a hierarchy of resource allocations create different statuses among racial identity groups. Because white people grow up as part of a higher, more powerful social status group, "Whites learn to perceive themselves . . . as entitled to similar privileges" as those enjoyed by other members of the white identity group (Helms, 1995, p. 188). To protect their privileged status, white people learn to deny and distort "race-related reality" as well as learn to react aggressively "against perceived threats to the racial status quo" (Helms, p. 188). As a result, Helms asserted that "healthy White identity development" involves a capacity to "recognize and abandon the normative strategies" developed by white people to maintain a racial reality that ignores or justifies white privilege (p. 188).

Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) challenged Helms' (1984, 1995) work on white racial identity development. They acknowledged the importance of the "dynamic progression" (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, p. 41) involved in racial identity development but made a distinction between "racial perceptions of others (racism) and racial perception of self (racial development)" (p. 42). While "perceptions of others are

important and act as triggers for development and consciousness", Chavez and Guido-DiBrito argued "there is great value in the consideration of racial and ethnic identity for oneself and groups of individuals" (p. 42). Most important, they criticized Helms for confusing "development toward a non-racist frame with development of a racial identity" by focusing on attitudes and behavior of white people toward black people rather than emphasizing the conscious development of "an actual white racial identity" (p. 42).

Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) also emphasized the significance of ethnic identity, which they defined as "points of connection" that "allow individuals to make sense of the world around them and to find pride in who they are" (p. 41). Ethnic identity development, in turn, was described as "an individual's movement toward a highly conscious identification with their own cultural values, behaviors, beliefs, and traditions" (p. 41). Both ethnic and racial identity models provide a valuable "theoretical structure for understanding individuals' negotiation of their own and other cultures" (p. 41); however, ethnicity for white people is "invisible and unconscious", according to Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (p. 39), with existing social norms based in white ethnic and cultural values and priorities routinely accepted as "standard American culture" (p. 39) rather than a distinct white ethnic identity. Chavez and Guido-DiBrito emphasized the importance of white people recognizing their own ethnic and cultural identities and asserted that "everyone benefits from the development of a conscious ethnic identity" as well as the use of multicultural learning frameworks instead of the existing unconscious white cultural framework (p. 39).

McKinney (2005) emphasized the situational context of white identity, citing a lack of awareness of differences in the experiences of white people as a key contributor

to the formation and perpetuation of a color-blind perspective of race as well as a foundational element of systemic white privilege (p. 113). White identity, according to McKinney, is based in an understanding of white people "that they are *not* black" (p. 197), which is in part a "situational identity" in that "white people highlight various elements of whiteness depending on what reactions are called forth by circumstances in which they find themselves" (p. 204). White people also often focus more on non-racial aspects of their identity - such as gender or class - as "a way of undermining the importance of race" (McKinney, p. 112) to offset benefits of whiteness by suggesting that white people have also experienced disadvantages due to group identity, similar to the experiences of people of color (p. 113). Whiteness also involves ignoring "any real disadvantages" of being a person of color as well as denying the economic benefits of white privilege and its corresponding economic disadvantages for people of color (p. 192). McKinney also noted that changing demographics have increased the proportion of non-white people in the population, initiating a "crisis of identity" that has caused more whites to "become racialized" and more consciously "think of themselves as members of a white racial group" (p. 217). In addition, white people are increasingly aware that they are losing their power as a majority group. As they become increasingly aware and connected to a more diverse global community and economy, white people are more cognizant of the fact that they are a global minority with greater economic and social vulnerability and dependence on non-white individuals and groups as key influences and stakeholders (Kirwan, 2004; McKinney, p. 215).

Markus (2010) also emphasized the importance of race and ethnicity as a critical factor of identity that shapes who we are and influences "how we think, feel and act" (p.

366). Markus described identity as a complex and dynamic social process that depends on context, with the impact of race and ethnicity dependent on group status, our view of our self, and others' view of us. As "the meeting place between self and society," identity locates and positions a person in the world, partly by personal choice but also through relationships to others and the dynamic context of life experiences over time and space (Markus, 2010, p. 362). Race and ethnicity also play a key role in providing or denying advantage and privilege, serving to differentiate groups and organize communities in a power hierarchy. Markus argued that because race and ethnicity are important in society, they impact identity, which in turn influences behavior, providing a basis for discrimination and inequality as well as relating to positive elements such as "pride, meaning, motivation and belongingness" (p. 372).

The work of Markus, McKinney, and Chavez and Guido-DiBrito support the consideration of specific issues of identity along with race and gender to examine the development and behavior of IWMLs, offering an expanded view of identity that relates to a body of research exploring multiple identities. Chavez and Sanlo (2013) applied the concept of multiple identities to the intersection of identity, leadership and practice, with specific attention to leadership work for social justice. Their collection of reflection pieces by student affairs leaders from a diverse range of population groups provides testimonies about the way multiple identities act as critical factors in leadership behavior and success, influencing "the way we lead, supervise, make decisions, persuade, form relationships and negotiate the myriad responsibilities faced each day" (Chavez & Sanlo, 2013, p. 3). Multiple identities also act as key influences on the "experiences and perceptions of power, and how we conceive of power" (Chavez & Sanlo, p. 3) and

provide “one of the greatest assets leaders bring to diverse campuses” (p. 5). At the same time, they asserted that multiple identities often present a barrier between an individual leader and others who are different, so leaders must develop a strong awareness of their own identities and how their identities impact their leadership practices and interactions with others who are different.

Another body of relevant research examines related issues of racial identity in two traditional approaches to diversity issues: color-blind versus racially aware strategies, and racist/non-racist positioning. McKinney (2005) openly challenged a color-blind approach to race due its reliance on whiteness as “the standard against which other groups are judged”, with white culture “only thought of as normal, not a distinct culture” (p. 79). Whiteness is described as a “mirrored identity” – it is “a reflection of everything that it is not” (McKinney, p. 95). While mirrored white identity is a culture-blind state based on a white person’s minimal sense of personal culture as well as other different cultures, people of color are forced to be very culture-conscious, with a “double consciousness of their own culture and white culture” in order to succeed and survive in a culture of whiteness (p. 98).

McKinney (2005) also asserted that whiteness is not a naturally occurring aspect of identity for white people – it is a “prompted identity” (p. 20) that typically is only recognized when the issue of whiteness is raised. When whiteness is communicated, it often occurs through stories or “remembered experiences” that include specific points in time – “turning points” – that challenged a color-blind perspective, instances when a person becomes conscious of their “whiteness, or race and racism, and come to a new understanding of what it means to be white” (p. 24). McKinney described a turning point

as “a moment of conscious whiteness, insight in the racialized nature of her or his life”, whereas an epiphany is “a more dramatic change of thinking and behavior in regard to race, usually built on a series of turning points” (p. 24). She pointed out that most turning point experiences result from interactions with others, usually with people of color, that break a lifelong pattern of no contact with “others” (p. 25). As a result, for many white people, “a sense of a racialized self is dependent on awareness of and contact with a racialized ‘Other’”– if no contact with people of color occurs and a color-blind philosophy is practiced, there will likely be no awareness of being white (p. 21).

Reason et al. (2005) examined white privilege and awareness of race within the specific environment of higher education by focusing on the whiteness of college campuses through an analysis of existing research combined with their own studies of white college students to explore how college experiences impact an understanding of whiteness (p. 534). Their studies demonstrated a positive correlation between awareness of whiteness and racial justice activism: “Students who exhibited little reflection on race had little understanding of Whiteness beyond skin color and took no racial justice action”, while students that “actively reconstructed their sense of Whiteness” exhibited the greatest involvement in racial justice activities (Reason et al., 2005, p. 543).

Reason and Evans (2007) expanded that study to explore existing research on campus environments, producing a view of two general types of college campuses: *color-blind* campuses that do not openly consider or examine race and whiteness, and *racially cognizant* campuses that consider race to be important. Color-blind campuses were described as lacking attention to systemic inequality, with an emphasis on individualism and merit, a lack of knowledge and awareness of whiteness and white racial identity, and

a general perception that the campus environment worked well for everyone involved. A racially cognizant campus, in contrast, was observed to recognize a “sense of Whiteness” (p. 71) that influenced development of a racialized sense of self among students. Racially cognizant campuses were reported to have a higher rate of white students exhibiting racial justice attitudes and actions than color-blind campuses, with a more "nuanced self-understanding and greater propensity toward racial justice actions” among students (p. 68).

While past research (Giroux, 1997; Kivel, 2004) documented the presence of whiteness on college campuses, Reason and Evans (2007) proposed that white students actually fit into a continuum model ranging from color-blind to racially aware perspectives rather than simply reflecting racist or non-racist attitudes - with most students falling somewhere between the two extremes. Increasing racial awareness among white students can help move them toward a racially aware perspective to “break the cycle that reproduces color-blind racism” and develop a “greater propensity toward racial justice actions” (Reason & Evans, 2007, p. 73). Helping white students acquire “greater racial saliency” (Reason & Evans, 2007, p. 68) can also counter racial apathy, indifference to inequality, and lack of action in the face of racial injustice linked to color-blind perspectives (p. 69). Recognizing whiteness was considered critical to considering the meaning of race in order to develop a “racialized sense of self” and better understand how to convert guilt, power and privilege into positive action (p. 71). Most important to a study of white male leaders, Reason and Evans proposed that a racially cognizant sense of self is a critical prerequisite for white people who engage in racial justice efforts (p. 71).

Trepagnier (2006) proposed a similar continuum as a way to assess race awareness among whites rather than traditional racist/non-racist categorization. In a study of racial awareness of educated white women, Trepagnier demonstrated a direct correlation between race awareness and increased information about racial issues and conversations about race between white and black people. The study also revealed a correlation between racial awareness and anti-racist activism among white people, with low or moderate awareness linked to passivity toward racism and high racial awareness linked to a lower likelihood of engagement in racist practices and greater likelihood to interrupt racist practices. Trepagnier also linked racial awareness to three key elements - knowledge of racism in American history; recognition of white privilege; and insight into one's own silent racism – and stressed shifting the attitudes of white people to more willingly accept a role as part of the problem in order to change the status quo.

Strategies and Activities to Develop Awareness

Another body of research relevant to a study of IWMLs explored personal practices and strategies that help white male leaders develop awareness and understanding of the impact of race and privilege and encourage them to accept responsibility to engage in leadership efforts to address diversity, equity and social justice issues. Trepagnier (2006) documented the importance of building a personal knowledge of racial issues, and much of the research presents evidence of harm from good intentions of white people that are not based in informed awareness:

> Uneducated compassion is reflected in a shallow or disingenuous attempt to understand the diverse realities of others. An incomplete or fragmented knowledge base results in faulty judgments and decision-making. The inability to

> engage in a serious way information about the realities of others keeps us from validating their experiences and circumstances (Anderson, 2008, p. 22).

Especially for white male leaders in higher education, research indicates that not only are good intentions not enough – relying on good intentions while failing to build awareness and understanding can actually create problems rather than move toward equity and social justice.

This area of research provides a wide array of studies aimed at finding ways to assess the degree of awareness and understanding of race and privilege and documenting the process by which individuals develop an informed understanding of racial identity, racism and privilege. Pinterits et al. (2009) explored the multidimensional nature of white privilege attitudes in a series of three related studies of white students designed to develop an instrument to assess White privilege attitudes from a framework that integrated cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Pinterits et al. 2009, p. 419). The resulting White Privilege Attitudes Scale (WPAS) - a "psychometrically reliable and valid instrument to assess the multidimensional nature of White privilege attitudes" (p. 417) – identified how these dimensional attitudes relate to each other as well as other racial attitudes such as color-blind racism, white racial identity and multicultural counseling competence. The study also identified four key analytical factors to assess white privilege attitudes: *awareness and understanding* of white privilege; *remors*e about white privilege, including anger and shame over its existence; *anticipated costs* of addressing white privilege, including fear and anxiety about addressing or losing white privilege; and *willingness to confront* white privilege (Pinterits et al. 2009, p. 426). The factor of confronting white privilege was considered particularly important and supported

earlier research on the link between privilege awareness and anti-racism activism (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001; Helms, 1995). Evidence of connections between privilege remorse with fear, guilt and anticipated costs suggested further research to explore the reaction of white people to an initial awareness of privilege and oppression.

Anderson (2008) advocated for the value of employing a six-stage developmental model of intercultural sensitivity and adaptation developed by Bennett **(**2004) to understand the process by which an individual develops cultural awareness and sensitivity**.** The three initial ethnocentric stages - *denial*, *defense*, and *minimization* – are based in an individual's personal culture acting as "the primary filter through which he or she interprets and experiences reality" (Anderson, 2008, p. 152). As awareness of cultural differences increases, individuals move into the ethnorelative stages of *acceptance*, *adaptation*, and *integration* with recognition and interpretation of other cultures perceived as different from one's personal culture (Anderson, p. 152). These latter stages provide a greater degree of comfort with "situations involving intercultural engagement" with a greater interest and desire to engage with others who are different, especially in an environment that "reduces anxiety, encourages learning, and supports peer engagement" (p. 153).

A process of active learning through self-reflection provides the foundation for many of the examples of effective methods of developing awareness of race and privilege. Boyd and Fales (1983) emphasized the importance of deliberate reflective learning strategies to ensure learning from life experiences:

> The process of reflection is the core difference between whether a person repeats the same experience several times, becoming highly proficient at one behavior,

> or learns from experience in such a way that he or she is cognitively or affectively changed . . . essentially changing his or her meaning structures (p. 100).

Boyd and Fales (1983) defined reflection as "the process of creating and clarifying the meaning of experience (present or past) in terms of self", with the experience focusing on an issue or concern that is "of central importance to the self" and the reflection process producing a "changed conceptual perspective" (p. 101). Furthermore, the process is "not a one way, linear process; it is more comparable to alternating current, flowing back and forth between intense focusing on a particular form of experience and outer experience" (p. 105).

Boyd and Fales' (1983) research intended to describe the "essential nature" of the process of reflective learning through a synthesis of four studies based in surveys of graduate students, counselors and educators (p. 101-102). The data produced a description of a multi-level reflective learning process consisting of a number of components. First, a *sense of inner discomfort* occurs – "something does not fit, or does not sit right within them . . . [it] is not a willed or intended state; it occurs" (p. 106) – that requires a response that the individual is not yet capable of producing (p. 107). Next, an *identification or clarification of the concern* takes place, with the problem "conceptualized in relation to self as the centerpoint reference of the problem" (p. 108). This stage is followed by openness *to new information from internal and external sources,* accompanied by an ability to identify relevant information to frame the issue from a variety of perspectives (p. 109). The individual then reaches *resolution*, which is described "as integration, coming together, acceptance of self-reality, and creative synthesis" (p. 109). At this point, the individual perceives they have changed and gains a

degree of comfort with the issue (p. 109), which can be accompanied by an element of surprise and sense of reward (p. 110). This feeling is then assessed to *establish a continuity of self* by "relating the changed self to past self, to present life and to future behavior" (p. 111). Last, the individual must *decide whether to act* on this new awareness and sense of self produced by the reflective process – determining if there is "operational feasibility" to directly apply the new understanding in practice (p. 112).

A number of studies emphasized a process of self-reflection by IWMLs specifically intended for the purpose of examining their racial identity and privileged status to increase awareness and understanding of race and privilege and to develop a greater sense of responsibility for taking action to address social injustice (Barlas et al. 2012; Chavez, 2013; Gallardo, 2013; Trepagnier, 2006). Barlas et al. (2012) stressed personal reflection as a key strategy to develop *critical humility*, a concept developed from experiential group sharing sessions among white counseling practitioners that focused on their personal experiences related to race and privilege (Barlas et al., 2012). The group sessions provided effective ways for the counselors to develop an understanding of "the root causes of difficulty in our own conversations" aimed at increasing effectiveness of interactions with other white people about race, racism and privilege (Barlas et al., p. 2). Critical humility integrated two aspects of the common challenges of "well-intentioned white people trying to confront racism in individuals and institutions" (p. 2). One aspect of critical humility involves "a way of being" to help white people avoid an attitude of superiority that can alienate "other white people who just don't get it" (Barlas et al., p. 2). The second aspect of critical humility emphasizes a conscious effort to keep an open mind to new learning by being aware that white people

benefit from privilege regardless of individual efforts and intentions to promote social justice. Concerned white people were reminded that while they must recognize their "knowledge is partial and evolving", they still must be "committed to speaking up and taking action in the world" based on their current knowledge, "however imperfect" (Barlas et al., p. 2).

Other research also emphasized the importance of having an open mind to new learning. Kezar (2007) stressed the value of a "mutual learning process" of dialogue and reflection between college presidents and students as part of the diversity change process (p.480). Personal efforts by presidents to interact with students through a "process of listening and understanding the student experience" were deemed critical to development of successful leadership efforts for diversity and inclusion (p. 580). Anderson (2008) stressed the importance of developing common ground through active efforts by leaders to "cross boundaries" to connect with other cultures: "It involves seeing around corners and anticipating consequences - characteristics that can generally be associated with effective leadership, but they are necessities for those who seek to cross boundaries" (p. 36).

Latino (2010) emphasized reflective processes to forge a connection between the personal and the professional aspects of being an inclusive leader: "We must strive to connect our mind with our heart to achieve the essence of inclusive leadership" (p. 216). Inclusiveness and leadership are interdependent, according to Latino, requiring an individual to first understand their self through a life journey "that is challenging, risk taking, and, at times, exhausting" (p. 216). Latino asserted that it is critical for white college administrators to understand their own personal racial identities and the

interconnectedness of these identities with their professional roles in order to achieve inclusiveness and bring about personal transformation (p.15). In turn, critical race reflection and subsequent actions that stem from the results of personal reflection were recognized as critical elements of transformational learning.

Latino (2010) perceived critical self-reflection as essential to "reform how [white college administrators] make meaning of their experiences", while critical awareness of racial discrimination helps prepare white people for active engagement in "critical race praxis" as a means of both reflecting and acting to address racial injustice (Latino, p. 15). By applying critical race reflection to "examine the context and life history that framed their meaning and knowledge about race", individuals came to question their "worldview" (Latino, p. 36) – in turn producing dilemmas that brought about a change in worldview. Referring to Mezirow (1991, 2000), Latino stressed two processes of reframing to bring about greater inclusiveness: *objective reframing* that involves "critically reflecting and challenging the assumptions of others instead of uncritically accepting their point of view" (p. 36), and *subjective reframing, "*a process by which individuals engaged in critical self-reflection question their racial assumptions", bringing about "a more inclusive personal identity - sense of self" (p. 37).

Gallardo (2013) also focused on reflection in a collection of personal essays on discovery of the self as a "cultural being" (p. 22). The concept of *cultural humility* stressed the importance of every individual's cultural heritage - including white people – as a key influence on one's life journey as well as the personal identity and responses to other cultures. Gallardo emphasized the value of intentional examination of one's own culture and deliberate efforts to engage in dialogue with others who are experiencing

their own process of self-examination and discovery. Issues of power, privilege and race present among cultural groups can serve to alienate people or bring them together, and Gallardo proposed cultural humility as a critical means to understanding the power relations of race and privilege and their impact on human rights.

At the heart of many awareness-building activities identified in the research is a recurring emphasis on the importance of reflective processes by white people to develop a greater understanding of internal issues of identity and self as well as external issues of race and privilege in one's personal life and in society at large. Boyd and Fales (1983) emphasized the critical importance of a deliberate dynamic reflective learning process to learn from life experiences and produce meaning to develop the self and change one's conceptual perspective. Latino (2010) stressed the need for white leaders to connect their personal racial identities with their leadership roles to achieve both personal transformation and successful efforts for diversity, race and justice issues. Gallardo's (2013) theory of *cultural humility* emphasized the importance of developing conscious awareness and consideration of individual personal cultural heritage of each white male leader. The concept of cultural humility can also be related to research on ethnic identity (Chavez and Guido-DiBrito, 1999; Markus, 2010) that stressed ethnic and cultural aspects of identity development as specific influences for white male leaders to explore in order to develop a greater awareness and understanding of race and privilege and increased ability and confidence to engage in diversity, race and justice issues.

Converting Awareness into Action

A number of studies emphasized the importance of converting personal awareness and understanding of race and privilege into action. This focus strikes at a key purpose of

becoming an IWML, for developing motivation, awareness and understanding of race and privilege will have little benefit if leaders do not transform their personal discovery and growth into social action. Bryson (1995), for example, emphasized that visionary leadership should provide a "conception of what success looks like and how it might be achieved" (p. 156) through a future-oriented strategy that reflects "high ideals and challenging ambitions" (p. 157) and leadership actions that create "a useful tension between the world as it is and the world as we would like it" (p. 158). According to Bryson, an effective vision of success "lends the organization an air of virtue" and appeals to a basic human desire to act "in morally justifiable ways in pursuit of morally justified ends" (p. 159).

Pinterits' et al. (2009) also suggested a moral aspect of social justice activism, connecting remorse over white privilege to a desire to develop a greater understanding of white privilege and, in turn, increased activism to combat privilege. Kendall (2006) directly challenged white people to first see themselves as members of a white racial group, and then accept responsibility to "step out and step up" and take action aimed at confronting fears of white people about the risks of losing privilege (p. 95). Barlas et al. (2012) linked reflection and action by white people in terms of reflection *on action* and reflection *in action* during challenging interpersonal situations; a willingness to engage in difficult conversations serves as a starting point for the critical interactive process of reflection, interaction, learning and action developed through interpersonal encounters aimed at communication about race, racism and privilege. Kendall (2006) echoed this emphasis on interpersonal contact, asserting that daily conversations about recognition of whiteness and increased personal relationships with oppressed people can help white

people become allies and change agents for social justice by developing genuine compassion for others and gaining a better understanding of the experiences and challenges of non-privileged groups. Each of these strategies emphasizes a link between personal reflection and active interactions with others to draw attention to the impact of race and raise the moral consciousness of other white people.

Kezar (2007) provided a strong case for the direct operational ways that presidents can act to influence incorporation of diversity issues into institutional policies, practices and actions. Since diversity initiatives can create political pressure and conflict, many presidents often avoid or ignore tension that arises in response to an active diversity agenda by focusing on more neutral vision and planning efforts – but "as long as leaders see politics and power as negative and try to ignore it, they prevent themselves from engaging in the creative aspect of politics and conflict that can help to create a new future on campus" (Kezar, 2008, p. 435). Kezar and Eckel (2008) emphasized the importance of transformational leadership efforts by presidents to implement a successful diversity effort that empowers others and develops trust to motivate people to accept new "values and preferences of the organizational culture" (p. 384). While presidents may choose to employ transactional leadership strategies that provide rewards as incentives for diversity initiatives within their campus community, transformational leadership seeks to motivate support for diversity by "appealing to moral and intellectual sensibilities" (p. 380). Kezar and Eckel also placed importance on the stage of an institution in terms of its experience with a diversity agenda, suggesting that:

> transformational leadership might be more important on campuses that were early in advancing their diversity agenda, as compared with those that had made

> significant progress over time, and that leaders at these early progress institutions might find themselves having to motivate people to support such an effort (p. 389).

At the same time, institutions at a later stage with more experience with a diversity agenda were also believed to be more appropriate for transformational leadership efforts that "directly appeal to people's higher moral interests (i.e. they were more prepared)" (p. 389).

In the end, Kezar and Eckel (2008) found that presidents selectively use "different elements of transformational leadership in different phases of institutionalization" (p. 390). At the earlier stage, presidents paid more individual attention to "students and faculty of colour" and worked to make them "feel like they mattered" by listening closely to them in an attempt to gain an understanding of their needs to inform an appropriate diversity agenda (p. 390). Charisma was also considered to be important at the early stage to display personal commitment and describe a vision: "Personal vision, commitment, role modelling and holding a clear ethical stance were described by college presidents as key elements of charisma" (Kezar & Eckel, 2008, p. 399). In the middle stage of institutional experience with diversity agendas, presidents typically reduced their emphasis on charisma, continued to employ individual attention, and stressed motivational strategies of "inspirational talks and campus conversations" (p. 399) to create shared ownership of a diversity vision (p. 390). In addition, they began to "emphasize intellectual stimulation" (p. 390) to question people by challenging stereotypes and engaging in critical conversations; instead of emphasizing listening, presidents often empowered others who showed support for diversity efforts. In the late

development stage, president usually focused on intellectual stimulation to help others deeply explore diversity issues.

Gallardo's (2013) concept of cultural humility also placed critical importance on the active work required to acknowledge privilege and power. The concept of cultural humility was not only promoted as a lifelong journey to increase awareness, discovering personal identity, and understanding the complexities of multicultural identity, it was also proposed as a way to address social justice issues through words and action that model ally behavior for other white people (Gallardo & Ivey, 2013). Referring to the work of Freire (1970), Gallardo (2013) stressed that critical thinking aids understanding of the context of individual challenges, which is necessary to develop *praxis* – "the power and knowledge to act against oppression" - and engage in social transformation by "putting themselves out there" and challenging other white people (Gallardo, 2013, p. 7).

Finally, Chavez (2013) proposed leadership practices and behaviors that combined aspects of motivation, identity and awareness theories with a focus on leadership aimed at overcoming privilege and engaging in active work for social justice. Presenting a view of motivation and responsibility partly spiritual in approach, Chavez described a complex dynamic of leadership identity and practices present in successful transformational efforts for equity and social justice that centered on "who we are, how we lead and how we are perceived" (p. 9), with an emphasis on two key aspects of leadership behavior and transformational efforts: each individual's internal "way of being" and external "way of doing".

Ways of being focuses on internal aspects of leadership that involve the "inherent qualities of individuals" (Chavez, 2013, p. 9) – principles, values, beliefs, sense of

responsibility, hope, strength and courage - that Chavez argued can be developed in any leader through introspection, observation, growth and learning. Asserting that a sense of responsibility for others and for leading change for social justice is rooted in early identity and life experiences, Chavez proposed that the ability to imagine things in a different way and see greater potential in people and situations is a "critical way of being" for leaders (p. 27). *Ways of doing*, in contrast, is more externally oriented, based in life experience, learning, observing and reflecting and demonstrated in leadership practices, strategies and transformational efforts. A "foundation of transformation" (p. 28) is considered essential for a leader to achieve purposeful change in the self and others through the interaction and integration of "being and doing" in daily practices and actions on behalf of others (p. 35). Chavez (2013) also proposed a critical combination of individual qualities for leadership of transformational change for social justice: a personal sense of responsibility for others; a desire to lead change for social justice; a commitment to transforming one's self and others; and a willingness to engage in action that occurs through life experiences, learning activities and personal reflection along with conscious efforts to acquire the necessary skills, practices and strategies to achieve transformational change.

Summary

While a wealth of literature informs my study of inclusive white male leaders in higher education, research exploring the impact of life experiences on IWMLs and their strategies to develop greater awareness and understanding of diversity, race and privilege offers particularly helpful information. Examining life experiences of individual IWMLs and their perception and interpretation of past experience offers opportunity for insight

into the development of identity and self as well as the formation of personal and professional goals and ambitions related to diversity, equity and social justice issues. The process by which IWMLs translate their experiences and memories into new understanding, leadership practices and future-oriented strategies to shape their own life and career path and the development of their institutions is also important to this study. Most significant, the research on how successful leaders transform their life experiences into insight and action is especially valuable to understand how they find ways to enact organizational change to provide access, inclusion and success for both privileged and non-privileged participants in higher education.

Chapter III

Conceptual Framework

The participants in the study are individuals who have reached key positions of leadership at the pinnacle of their institution or system. While some of them may have been pressured or influenced to actively address diversity, equity and social justice issues, as privileged individuals, they have the luxury of choice about whether to actively engage in diversity efforts (McKinney, 2005). Something drives some white male leaders to strive to recognize and understand race and privilege as both an advantage in their personal life and career and a disadvantage for women and people of color around them. Most important, a select number of these leaders choose to use their personal position of privilege and power to take action and press discussion with those around them to initiate transformational change for diversity, equity and social justice within their institution and community.

The focus of this study can be summarized in one broad question: How can privileged white male leaders effectively understand, respond to and support the needs and interests of oppressed and marginalized groups? To answer this question, my study has three areas of focus. First, I examine the life experiences of the IWMLs in the study – *what happened to them or around them in their life* - to search for life events or influences that prompted them to develop an awareness and interest in diversity, equity and social justice issues. Next, I consider the activities used by these leaders – *how did they respond to their life experiences* – to develop a greater understanding of their identity and their place in the world as well as to consider how privilege has impacted their life and affected the lives of others around them. Last, I examine the strategies and

actions by the leaders – *what have they done in their leadership role* - to convert their personal awareness and understanding into action as advocates and change agents for diversity, equity and social justice issues on their campus and in their communities.

Process Map

The connections between the three research questions for this study can be captured in a simple flow chart to describe a general process of personal change suggested by my research and interviews with inclusive white male leaders. I propose that this process begins with one or more external life events or experiences that create an initial recognition and awareness of the impact of race and privilege. The experiences then inspire a transition phase consisting of an internal reflective process to explore issues of race and privilege as well as their place as a leader in their social and cultural context, culminating in a final stage of action to apply their learning to bring about transformational change in the self and others and within their institution.

In the first stage of life experience, 'something happens' to a white male leader in the form of external influences that are largely uncontrolled by the individual (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; McKinney, 2005). Even if the initial experience is sought out by an individual, such as deliberately traveling to a new place with a very different population

and culture (McKinney, 2005), the life experience is not controlled by the individual and it is largely based in direct or indirect interactions with others that impact the individual (Bruner, 1995; Erikson, 2007; Helms, 1995; Markus, 1983, 2010). These life experiences can take many forms: a new environment or social context; an influence from a mentor, role model or even an antagonist; or a specific 'crucible' event or turning point that transforms the individual and creates a new sense of identity (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Kendall, 2006; McKinney, 2005).

The middle transition stage of reflective exploration builds on the recognition and awareness initiated by life experience(s) that relate to a leader's perception of race, privilege, identity and self. The external influences of life experience produce an internal impact on the individual – the 'light bulb begins to flicker' as the individual realizes something new or different about the world and his place in it. For example: he may first recognize his is 'white', or realize that he receives a social privilege for no apparent earned reason, or he may witness a 'wrong' done to another person because of membership in a group defined by race, gender or social status. In some cases, something may directly happen to the individual or someone close to him that disturbs and challenges the individual leader's view of the world and his place in it.

At this point in the transition stage of the process, a division becomes evident in the overall group of white male leaders in higher education. All white male leaders likely experience life events that challenge their view of the world to some degree and most of the individuals probably recognize that 'something is different' or possibly 'wrong' – but only some leaders choose to act on that recognition and develop enough interest or concern to delve deeper into their experience to make more sense of it and find greater

meaning. This potential phenomenon is a primary focus of my study: the fact that some white male leaders may be relatively unchanged by their experiences, with possibly only a superficial note of what occurred in their life, in contrast to some white male leaders who stop, take note, and begin thinking about what their experiences might mean to them and their understanding of the world. This initial recognition sparks an active exploration for some leaders, including deliberate activities such as reflection, learning, and dialogue with others to deliberately examine one's self, race, ethnicity and culture as well as differences from others and how it all fits into the leader's view of the world and his leadership role.

The final stage of the change process focuses on action, when the internal process of reflection and understanding transforms into agency, with visible behavior and actions aimed at achieving a defined and desired purpose or outcome (Erikson, 2007). Questions are asked, people are challenged, decisions are made and actions are taken that pursue issues raised by the exploration process and the new understanding resulting from that process. Just as a new plant grows in fertilized soil, key life experiences plant seeds for a new identity and view of the world that develops through a germination process of personal reflection and interactions with others to prompt a new identity to emerge. Just as only some plants grow and thrive from a handful of seeds, only a select group of white male leaders ultimately embarks on a path of personal and institutional change in support of diversity, equity and social justice.

Key Factors

Within this process of personal development and change, a number of key factors create conditions and affect outcomes; these themes may be present in one or all of the

three stages in the change process, or applied in different ways by each leader. For example, the *timing of life events and actions* refers to when a key event occurs in the development of a leader, or when a past experience is recalled by a leader for consideration or application in the present moment. Research also indicates that leaders often strategically plan the timing of their efforts to create transformational change related to diversity, equity and social justice in alignment with the current state of their institution or campus to consider and accept an intended change (Kezar & Eckel, 2008).

A focus on *development of identity and sense of self* involves consideration of how a white male leader may strive to understand his own identity and self and consider how his multiple identities – including future or possible selves - relate to his leadership role and efforts to create organizational change for diversity, equity and social justice issues in his institution. In light of research that documents the significant differences between color-blind and racially cognizant campuses in higher education (Reason et al, 2005; Reason & Evans, 2007), there is also value in exploring where IWMLs places themselves along a continuum of color-blind to racially cognizant philosophies and how their view on this issue influences their perception of, involvement in, and leadership actions for diversity, equity and social justice issues.

A third consideration involves the *use of personal narrative and story-telling* by IWMLs to make sense of their life experiences and develop an evolving identity and sense of self. Research indicates there is meaning in the way a leader recounts life experiences, revealing a view of his changing place in the world as a person and an organizational leader. In some instances, there is evidence that learning and interpreted meaning from life events actually takes place later in life through recollection and

reflection after the fact (Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Leaders also use story telling as a way to convey a personal vision for their organization to inspire support for a collective common issue or goal (Crosby& Bryson, 2005).

Research also emphasizes the significance of *interpersonal relationships and interactions with others* for developing awareness and understanding of race and privilege. Bruner's (1991; 1995) theory of intersubjectivity stressed interactions with others as a key way that individuals develop meaning and mutual understanding of the world. Interpersonal contact between leaders and oppressed people also helps leaders develop compassion for others as well as a better understanding of the challenges faced by non-privileged people and groups (Kendall, 2006). Research also documents deliberate ways for white male leaders to interact with other white people to promote diversity and social justice, including theories of critical humility (Barlas et al, 2012) and cultural humility (Gallardo, 2013) that offer ways for white leaders to successfully initiate challenging conversations about whiteness and race to confront racism and privilege.

A final key element in the research relates directly to the focus of this study: the interplay between *reflection and action*, described by Chavez (2013) as "ways of being" and "ways of doing". The most successful leaders of diversity efforts often cultivate both internal and external aspects of their skill sets and behavior to develop personal qualities of leadership along with conscious understanding of their self and others in their life and work (Chavez, 2013). In turn, these principles and understanding impact their leadership work, combining personal growth with leadership development to accomplish organizational or institutional change for a greater good. This theme provides a way to

consider the degree to which IMWLs combine a focus on both personal growth and improvement as a person with professional growth as a leader in higher education, and how that dual emphasis sets them apart as higher education leaders committed to addressing issues of diversity, equity and social justice despite their privileged status as white males.

Positionality

My interest in this research topic is related to my own life experiences as a white male; a growing curiosity about my own self and life journey has led me down this research path. As I struggled over the past two years to develop my research focus, I realized that my growing engagement in diversity issues in my professional work in higher education and community development has caused me to increasingly reflect on my own life experiences. I increasingly questioned how I can effectively play a valid role in promoting diversity, equity and social justice given my status and life experience as a white male. My personal interest in this issue forms the basis for this study through my desire to explore how white male leaders in higher education become engaged in diversity issues, and how some leaders find ways to come to terms with the challenges of their own whiteness and privilege and achieve success in their leadership efforts for diversity issues.

It is critical that I consider how my personal positionality impacts the design and outcomes of my research – to paraphrase Kezar (2000), I must weigh "whether who I am, based on my experience, influences what or how I know in regard to my study" (p. 726). As an older white male with no overt personal experiences of oppression, I am a member of my targeted research group. In addition, I am in the process of striving to become an

inclusive white male leader, which is the focus of my study. Furthermore, I have reached this point in my development through recent years of concentrated effort to try to understand my racial identity, ethnicity and cultural background and how they relate to others who are different. It is clear that my own personal situation can help me understand the participants in my study yet it could also present a risk of over-empathizing with participants or projecting my own thoughts and views on their responses.

I have consciously worked to be cognizant of my potential bias to ensure the collection and analysis of data was not corrupted by my own personal experiences, dilemmas or views. Just as much of the research shows that a white male leader experiences his privileged status as both an asset and a liability, my membership in the same population group as the participants in my study presents me with my own challenges and advantages related to my research. My personal connection to the participants may limit my ability to recognize some aspects of participants' experiences. At the same time, my role as a white male leader in higher education exploring aspects of identity development that I share with the participants in my study can offer me "an indigenous, 'insider' perspective [that] can be used to gain different insights into data than would come from an outsider's perspective" (McKinney, 2005, p. xix).

At times during the interviews, I intentionally shared aspects of my personal background, interests and identities with participants in my study, presenting my research in terms of how it relates to my own motivation and interest in understanding why and how some white males become successful participants in diversity initiatives and social justice work. My background, identity and interests may have helped reduce a possible

sense of risk for the study participants and encouraged more open dialogue, possibly prompting more open responses due to the similarities in our identities and interests. At the same time, I strove to be mindful of potential bias from my personal views, thoughts and experiences during the process of gathering and interpreting the data.

Definitions of Key Terms

This study uses a number of key terms – *inclusion, diversity, equity, social justice, privilege, identity, white identity, whiteness,* and *reflection* - requiring definitions to ensure accuracy of meaning and intention when using these terms. Some of the terms have a definition or meaning based on strong consensus among scholars and experts, others have varying definitions and meaning depending on a particular theory, use or perspective. Other terms are used frequently in the literature, but rarely with any specific definition. For the purposes of this study, the reader should assume the following definitions of these key terms:

- **Inclusion:** Definitions of the term *inclusion* (or inclusive) suggest a multifaceted and systemic approach to institutional and cultural change in regard to diversity, equity and social justice issues (Kezar, 2007; Kezar & Eckel, 2008). The terms also refer to the scope of differences encompassed by a diversity effort that involves visible differences such as age, gender, race, etc. as well as differences in experience, ability, skills, practices, and personalities (Morrison et al, 2007). Latino (2010) used the term in two ways: a more general application related to the broad range of individual and group identities, and more specifically, in reference to the concept and philosophy of Inclusive Excellence "that encourages inclusive learning environments that infuse diversity and excellence into every aspect of an

institution including: mission, policies and procedures, hiring practices, curriculum, and research" – or stated more succinctly, "into every component of the campus community" (p. 3). A more specific definition relevant to this study is the intent and effort to "welcome and value all identities in campus communities" that have historically excluded non-white individuals (Latino, p. 4).

Considering these various definitions, the use of *inclusive* and *inclusion* in this study refer to the behavior, practices and intent of white male leaders to make higher education and an individual campus environment and its specific groups and activities available and welcoming to all people and viewpoints.

- **Diversity:** A focus of inclusion is to increase and support *diversity*, a term that has a variety of definitions. A typical view of diversity often refers to groups of people with different common characteristics of race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion and nationality (Gallardo, 2013; Hale, 2004; Winbush, 2004). Diversity in higher education has historically been viewed from the perspective of all-white institutions, indicating an intent to get "more persons of color to teach and matriculate at white institutions", with a focus on African-Americans, Latinos and indigenous populations (Winbush, 2004, p. 35). In most instances, diversity in higher education is commonly perceived to refer to developing a community or population that includes a range of different types of students, faculty and staff, with those differences typically viewed in terms of traditional visible differences such as race, ethnicity, gender, age and ability but also including aspects of culture, experience, expertise, skills, life-styles, working practices and

personalities (Morrison et al, 2007). Diversity in higher education today also refers to societal and pedagogical issues; a college or university is expected to display and provide a range of resources and policies that allows it to "excel and function in society to fulfill its mission" (Smith, p. 254), presenting and encouraging different ideas and points of view that are "essential to learning" (Hale, 2004, p. 10). Diversity in higher education is also linked to equity and defined in terms of the degree of "access and success of under-represented groups" (Smith, 2009, p. ix) that is promoted by a "network of values, policies, practices, traditions, resources and sentiments used to provide coping mechanisms for students and faculty of color" (Hale, 2004, p. 11).

The use of the term *diversity* in this study is based in part in the comprehensive definition proposed by Smith (2009, p. 64): the active presence of all members of under-represented populations, and the provision of policies and practices that ensure equal access and participation for all members of the campus community.

- **Equity**: Whereas *inclusion* refers to deliberate efforts to make higher education and its institutions and campuses available and welcoming to all people and viewpoints, *equity* is generally defined in terms of fairness and just treatment of people (Merriam-Webster, 2015). In more specific terms relevant to this study, equity refers to "the condition that would be achieved if [a person's] identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. . . . [and eliminates] policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes [based on identity]" (Racial Equity Resource Guide, 2017). *Equality* is objective and measurable, typically viewed as ensuring equal resources and

opportunity, offering everyone the same circumstances in terms of what is allowed or provided to them - for example, equal access to higher education means that everyone has an opportunity to attend college, and no one is prohibited from having access to a college education. *Equity* is more subjective and considers the varying factors that may help or hinder some individuals and groups in terms of how they can make use of equal access to opportunities and resources. For example, depending on background, social standing and personal circumstances, different individuals and groups can have varying degrees of preparation for college success, or ability to pay for college, or even the means to physically get to a campus, that can hinder or prevent them from participating in and completing a college education. All may have the same equal opportunity available to them, but some may face more challenges to take advantage of the opportunity and find success from their efforts. A focus on equity considers those potential differences and works to ensure that appropriate and effective policies, practices and resources are in place to provide everyone with a truly fair and equal opportunity to successfully participate in higher education.

In this study, *equity* is used to refer to the conditions, policies, practices, resources and behaviors that ensure all people have an equal opportunity to access and succeed in college. Less-advantaged and less-privileged individuals and groups are provided with the necessary access, resources and services to ensure a genuine equal opportunity for participation, persistence, completion and success in higher education.

- **Social Justice**: Whereas *justice* involves formal legal rights and processes that ensure fair, consistent and equal treatment through established laws and policies

> that govern the nation, *social justice* merges the concepts of equity and justice through "a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, [involving] social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole" (Racial Equity Resource Guide, 2017). In this study, for example, the participants are viewed as social actors with a responsibility to do more than ensure a fair, just and legal system of operation within their institution. As inclusive leaders, they are expected to demonstrate an active sense of social responsibility to ensure that their institution not only provides equality in terms of access to higher education – it also ensures that equity and justice is a core element of the mission, curriculum, culture and practices of the institution and its campus community. Furthermore, this study assumes that participants emphasize the social values, beliefs and behaviors that students develop while attending the institution to prepare them to go out into the world with a similar sense of personal social responsibility for promoting justice in their life and work.

In this study, *social justice* refers to an emphasis on institutional policies, practices and behaviors that combine a commitment to access and equity with a strong sense of social responsibility to help all people succeed within the campus community and in society as a whole. A strong sense of social justice is considered as important to the institutional mission as the academic, intellectual and technical knowledge and expertise that students gain from their chosen course of academic study.

- **Privilege**: As described by McIntosh, *privilege* provides a systematic, ongoing reward of unearned benefits and advantages to white people - and in particular, for the purpose of this study, to white males. In addition to individual forms of daily experience that provide benefits and opportunities awarded through status of race and gender, privilege also systematically confers power (Kendall, 2006) through the elevation of white people over persons of color through policies and practices of exclusion and oppression (Gallardo, 2013). Furthermore, the characteristics of privileged groups of white people and white males are generally perceived as the societal norm in the United States, allowing privileged people to rely on privilege and related power while avoiding acknowledgement of the oppression of persons of color and women that are the result of the perpetuation of privilege (Wildman & Davis, 1995, p. 110).

As used in this study, *privilege* refers to male privilege and white privilege, and in some instances, to the collective phenomenon of interlocking privilege rooted in multiple identities (McIntosh, 1988b). *Privilege* is defined for this study to mean the combined privileged status of race and gender enjoyed by white males, including the systemic, unearned advantages awarded to white males and the accompanying access to power that contributes to oppression and marginalization of people of color and women.

- **Identity:** The concept of *identity* is integrated into many aspects of this study. Definitions of identity often focus on common visible individual characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender and ability as well as less visible or apparent aspects such as class, culture, religion, sexual orientation and nationality (Gallardo, 2013; Smith, 2009). These elements of identity also relate to group

membership. In addition, aspects of identity can be voluntary or assigned based on these characteristics, and identity can be considered in personal and/or social aspects (Smith, 2009). Other definitions of identity go beyond the surface to consider meaning and relationship of identity to context (Gallardo, 2013; Markus, 2010), with identity the result of a "complex and dynamic relationship between an individual and the outside world", particularly in how a person understands their self within a social context (Gallardo, 2013, p. 156). Often identity develops through comparison with other people, as in a common universal identity like all other people, a social or group identity that is similar to some people, and a personal identity that is different from others (Gallardo, 2013). According to Markus (2010), "a person's identity depends on her own view of herself, but it also depends on others' view of her" (p. 361). One's identity may be in part a personal choice or a collective view; it can also depend on context - "where in the web of social relations a person is located at any particular time" (Markus, 2010, p. 364). Research suggests that in the end, each person's identity is unique, a "personal signature" (Markus, p. 365) that is a complex and dynamic combination of personal and private, and public social and contextual aspects that in the end indicate "how a person sees the world depends on her identity, and her identity depends on her experiences in the world" (Markus, p. 366). In addition, as a specific aspect of identity, *schemas* provide frameworks of meaning and value to help individuals organize their experiences to "make sense of world" to "guide us, tell us what is real, what is true and what should matter", while identity tells us

> "how to think, feel and act, what to do and what not to do . . . [identities serve as] both frames of reference and sets of blueprints for action" (Markus, p. 366).

While aspects of group identity are included in this study of white male leaders, references to individual identity are used in ways that best fit Gallardo's and Markus' concepts of personal identity as a dynamic interaction between the internal and external, the personal and the public, the self and others. There is particular emphasis on the interplay between personal identity and meaning making – how each leader interprets his life experiences and evolving self in relationship to the world and his leadership role in higher education, and particularly in regard to how each IWML perceives his identity in relationship to non-privileged people and related issues of race, privilege, diversity and social justice. At the same time, this study will also explore possible common aspects of identity development that cause some white male leaders in higher education to develop a "personal signature" (Markus, 2010, p. 365) of identity marked by a commitment to act as an inclusive white male leader. To be specific, in this study, the term *identity* is used to mean: the physical, behavioral, psychological, professional and social characteristics of a person in the past, present and future that create a personal sense of self and relationship to others, similar and different, formed in part by conscious choice as well as through subconscious conditioning from external influences and assignment by others.

- **White Identity**: While this term can apply to a broad range of specific forms ranging from a white supremacist to a non-racist white identity, *white identity* often refers to "what it has historically meant to be white in the United States and in the world at large" (McKinney, 2005, p. 12).

The term *white identity* is used in this study to refer to the development of a personal understanding by white people of what it means to be a white person in American society – in the past, present and future – particularly in comparison to the contrasting experiences of people of color.

- **Whiteness:** *Whiteness* is defined as a social and cultural system of rewards and resources based on race and skin color that puts white people in an advantaged status "at the expense of oppressing people of color" (McKinney, p. 15). Especially in America, whiteness is defined as "a structure of relations, a process of inclusions and exclusions, a pattern for organizing human difference" (McKinney, p. 17) that serves as an "unmarked category against which difference is constructed" among the people in our nation (Lipsitz, 2002, p. 71).

It is significant to note that the general definition of *whiteness* (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2015) includes "the quality or state of being white", as a color, and a "freedom from stain, or cleanness", descriptions that embody purity in contrast to implied antonyms like 'dirty', 'unclean' and 'stained'. When positioned in terms of identity and race, these descriptions reinforce the social construct that being white is a positive, desirable identity. The meaning and impact of this social construct is a key focus of this study, with *whiteness* used in this study to mean the bias of growing up, living and leading from a socially and culturally advantaged position of exclusion and differentiation based on one's perceived race or skin color.

- **Reflection/Self-Reflection:** Much of the research indicates that a key activity and strategy to help white males become inclusive leaders involves various forms of

reflection, including self-reflection. Definitions of this term in the research include the act to "turn ourselves inside out", to view different sides of a situation (Kendall, 2006, p. 2), and "introspection" prompted by something or someone that "interrupts another's racism" or provides information contradicting a "preconceived notion about race" (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 116).

In this study, the term *reflection* is used to refer to an unspoken internal process and/or external dialogue of questioning, reframing and learning to examine situations, conditions and beliefs with the intent to challenge personal views and perceptions and develop new ways of thinking and behaving.

Chapter IV

Methodology

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What kind of life experiences influence white male leaders to become involved in diversity, equity and social justice work?
2. What types of strategies and activities help inclusive white male leaders develop awareness and understanding of how identity, race and privilege relate to their leadership behavior and practices?
3. What strategies and actions do inclusive white male leaders employ to address diversity, equity and social justice issues?

Design of the Study

I employed a grounded theory method to develop theory from the data (Merriam, 1998; Glaser, 2014). This general methodology is "a way of thinking about and conceptualizing data" that has been applied in a broad range of qualitative studies (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 275) and provides an appropriate approach for a study that explores processes, activities and events such as the life experiences and reflection efforts of IWMLs in higher education (Creswell, 2003, p. 183). I am interested in doing more than documenting data gained from interviews with the presidents in my study – I am also interested in documenting their personal stories of challenge, growth and development as told in their own words (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). I am also attracted to the discovery aspect of a grounded theory approach that will develop theory through "interplay with data" during the "course of actual research" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 278).

A grounded theory method is best suited to exploring and interpreting the perspectives, thoughts and accounts of the participants in this study to assess and make meaning of their leadership behavior and actions (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 274). Instead of testing a proven theory, this study attempts to reveal what is not yet known about inclusive white male leaders - as Glaser (2014) states, a grounded theory approach "helps us to see things as they are, not as we preconceive them to be" (p. 48). My study is intended to determine the possible existence of characteristics, behaviors and practices common to the IWMLs in the study, and then compare the findings to existing theory, basing my approach in a belief that the theoretical concepts of the study "must be discovered and the applicability will emerge with it" (Glaser, 2014, p. 47).

Participant Selection

The process of selecting study participants took place in January and February of 2016 and employs practices used in relevant studies of university presidents (Kezar, 2007, 2008; Kezar & Eckel, 2008). Participant selection relied on the following criteria:

- Experience as a current or former president or chancellor of a college, university or higher education system
- Reputation as a leader of diversity initiatives and/or social justice work within their institution or among peers, professional organizations and/or community groups
- Documented success of diversity and equity initiatives or involvement in social justice work to address issues of exclusion or oppression, such as:
    - Development of an institutional diversity agenda with significant progress toward implementing that agenda

  - Changes in institutional mission to include diversity or social justice issues
  - Development and implementation of a strategic plan focused on diversity and/or social justice
  - Increased funding for diversity related activities and programs
  - Increased number of programs and staff positions related to diversity
  - Campus climate studies that document positive change in the campus environment for marginalized and non-privileged people and groups
- Evidence of self-reflection and dialogue with others as a means to develop self-awareness and understanding of diversity, race, gender and privilege issues

Initial identification of potential subjects for the study came from internet research and recommendations from individuals working in higher education. I also conducted internet research on higher education institutions with presidents perceived as white male able-bodied heterosexual leaders who display a heightened interest in diversity initiatives and/or social justice activities as evident in documents and reports on institutional initiatives and programs. Study participants were not restricted to a specific geographic area or institutional type, as my primary concern was the successful recruitment of participants that met the selection criteria and were willing to engage in the study. I established a target pool of forty-seven potential candidates for the study and then contacted each leader through a hard-copy introductory letter mailed to his office and a follow-up email message to his administrative assistants; in some cases, a follow-up phone call helped explain the study and role of participants.

Twenty presidents and chancellors agreed to participate in the study. Within the pool of participants, experience in a position as president or chancellor of a higher education institution ranged from one year to twenty years, with an average of ten years of experience among the participants. Two-thirds of participants had nine years or more experience in a chief executive role and one-third had five years or less as a president or chancellor. Five of the study participants were no longer in a position as president or chancellor, having retired or moved into another high-ranking administrative position in higher education. All participants except one were leaders of public institutions. Fourteen participants were from universities, with nine of those leaders from public state universities, four from public research universities, one from a private research university; the other six participants were from public two-year institutions, with two leaders of technical colleges and four leaders from community or community and technical colleges. In terms of geographic sampling, eleven participants were from the Midwest region, four were from the South/Southeast region of the U.S., three from Western U.S. and two from Canada.

Reactions varied among the presidents asked to participate in the study. The presidents who did not agree to take part in the study typically indicated that their schedule did not allow for the time needed to conduct the interview. Many of them, however, indicated support for the topic of study and expressed appreciation for being considered as a possible participant. Most of the presidents who agreed to participate in the study also expressed strong support for, and interest in, the topic and appreciated being included in the potential pool of participants. In fact, a majority of study participants indicated some degree of surprise to be identified as an inclusive white male

leader. Many of the participants shared a common view that while they appreciated recognition of their personal efforts to address diversity, equity and social justice issues, they emphasized that their work was an institutional initiative and priority more than an individual effort. They also consistently focused on the challenges ahead rather than taking credit for their successful efforts to date. A number of participants indicated that they viewed the invitation to participate in the study as one more indication of their institution's progress with diversity issues. Many of the participants also commented that the interview process provided them with an opportunity for further reflection on their personal leadership journey as well as an additional assessment of their progress to date and the work that lies ahead for them, their institution and higher education in general.

While I was initially concerned about being able to successfully recruit enough participants for my study due to the personal nature of the topic, I had a 49% recruitment rate (20 participants from 41 recruiting contacts), excluding six contacts that never responded to my recruitment effort. Most of the twenty participants indicated that their agreement to participate in the study was primarily due to two reasons: a general willingness to support research work by students, and as an extension of the leader's commitment to support diversity, equity and social justice work. The final pool of participants was very interested in my study and encouraged future publication of my research. In many cases, they were quite enthusiastic about the opportunity to share their story and use the interview process as one more way to reflect on and continue their own personal journey of discovery, growth and leadership for diversity.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews were conducted via telephone between March and June 2016, except for one participant early in the process who requested an in-person interview. Interview protocol focused on developing insight in three key areas: what inspired the study participants to become an inclusive white male leader in higher education; how these leaders developed understanding of the experiences and challenges of diverse groups of people; and what strategies were employed by the participants to effectively lead efforts to promote diversity and address privilege and social justice issues (see Appendix B). The interviews were also supplemented by preliminary and additional data drawn from documents and reports via the internet on each leader and his respective institution.

The interviews used the elite interview process employed by Kezar (2007, 2008) and Kezar and Eckel (2008). Background information was gathered prior to the interview and advance information was provided to the participants regarding the purpose of the study. In addition, participants received the interview questions in advance to help them understand the study and prepare for the interview. Length of interviews ranged from forty-five minutes to two hours and all interviews were conducted in one session. The interviews were audio recorded, with notes taken during the interviews, and each interview was fully transcribed verbatim from the audio recording. While interview questions were shared with the subjects prior to the interviews, the subjects were allowed to focus the discussion as they chose. Questions, open dialogue and reflection were encouraged during the interview in hope that some insight would be developed during the discussion rather than simply gathering information and responses that may have been prepared by the participants in advance. Every interview took place during the normal

workday, in most cases via telephone from their campus office, and only a few instances of brief interruptions occurred during the interviews.

Since I used a grounded theory approach, data collection was combined with the ongoing process of data analysis to work toward developing a theory or conclusion. Interviews emphasized "the systematic asking of generative and concept-relating questions" followed by systematic coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 274-275), with a process of constant comparison throughout data collection to assess, interpret and organize the data. Key excerpts from the interview transcripts were initially coded to correspond to each research question, and then used to develop an evolving series of categories and themes to facilitate interpretation of the meaning of the data (Merriam, 1998, p. 192). I also regularly reflected on my research role as the "primary instrument of data collection" (Merriam, 1998, p. 17), at times writing down thoughts on the process and emerging analysis as well as comparing my own life and career journey with the accounts of these leaders.

An ongoing set of working hypotheses helped identify preliminary "plausible relationships" to connect the categories and properties (Strauss & Corbin, p. 278), using both inductive and deductive processes to compare incoming data with initial findings and interpret the meaning of the data (Merriam, 1998). As the data gathering proceeded, I began to perceive "patterns of action and interaction" by IWMLs to reveal relationships (Strauss & Corbin, p. 278) between life experiences, reflection and learning activities as well as behavior and practices of the participants. These findings were then related to the most relevant research theories. It was intriguing to see a parallel between my research approach and the personal development of each participant, with processes of

observation, reflection and learning proving to be critical to both my study and the personal growth of each participant. Just as the development of IWMLs relates to their own personal process of experience, reflection, learning and action, the grounded theory approach to this study was based on "specific, everyday-world situations" (Merriam, 1998, p. 17) with an emphasis on moving from data and theory to application in practice.

Trustworthiness

Following the lead of Kezar (2007, 2008) and Kezar and Eckel (2008), the primary method of ensuring trustworthiness of data was to allow the study participants to review the interview transcript and summary analysis. Each subject received a transcript of his interview and was given the opportunity to correct, edit or expand on it to ensure an accurate record of his thoughts and views. Each subject also received a summary analysis of the key data extracted from the interview to allow him to question, correct or comment further on the analysis and interpretations of the interview content.

Six participants approved the interview transcript as presented, nine participants did not respond to the offer to review the interview transcript, and five participants replied with minor edits to the transcript. Ten participants approved the summary of key points extracted from the interview transcript, eight participants did not respond to the offer to review the summary of key points, and two participants made minor edits to the interview summary. In most cases, edits involved correcting a specific detail such as spelling of the name of a person or place, or correcting a specific fact; in one case, information was added to the transcript to expand on a specific response to a question, and in one instance a few short comments were removed due to the potentially sensitive nature of the response. In general, responses from participants indicated that the

transcript and summary points provided an accurate and thorough documentation of the interview process and appropriately portrayed their experiences and thoughts related to their diversity, equity and social justice work.

Research Limitations

One limitation of this study is its scope, as the number of presidents involved in my study is smaller than the pool of subjects in other related studies (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Kezar, 2008; Kezar & Eckel, 2008; Ligon et al, 2008). Another limitation is the lack of a comparative pool of 'less engaged' white male leaders that would provide a comparison to more clearly document what is unique and different about the development and behavior of IWMLs in higher education. There is also a limitation in that my study only involved one interview session conducted over the phone; a more intense study with several in-person interview sessions would allow for more follow-up discussion that could produce more or different data to consider. There is also limitation in the subjective nature of the study, as it depends heavily on my own perceptions, thoughts and interpretations of the data as well as the personal thoughts and views of each subject. The strong support from study participants for the summary analysis of the interview (only two participants made minor changes to the summary) indicates considerable strength in this study, as the participants approved the key points identified as primary indicators of their experiences and views regarding their work for diversity, equity and social justice.

Chapter V

Analysis of Findings: Motivation

The findings from this study fit into two broad categories - *internal or personal* factors and *external or environmental* factors. The key influences that motivated study participants to engage in diversity work are split fairly equally between internal drivers involving personal beliefs and principles and external elements such as upbringing, education, or influences in the environment around the study participants. Strategies and activities employed by study participants to develop greater understanding of diversity issues include introspective efforts such as personal reflection combined with externally oriented activities like active dialogue with other people that provide insight and opportunities for personal growth and learning. The combination of motivating factors and learning experiences encouraged a critical stage of action necessary to develop a reputation and record as an inclusive white male leader (IWML). The actions of study participants also involved both internal and external elements, with leaders focusing on their own personal behavior and growth as well as initiating actions aimed at influencing their campus and community to create a more diverse, inclusive and just world.

Motivating Influences

At the beginning of this study, I suspected participants would report that they developed a personal interest in diversity issues through some critical life event or other external influence that directly or indirectly impacted them and influenced their later emergence as an IWML. The first phase of this study explores the personal life experiences and events that motivated study participants to become engaged in diversity, equity and social justice work. Interviews with each participant identified motivating

influences that fall into two general categories: *personal principles and beliefs* related to key stages of life during their youth, adolescence, college years and earlier career work, and *specific life events* at a various points throughout the course of their life.

In terms of personal principles and beliefs, three primary drivers stand out among the study participants. Most important, all twenty participants indicated a sense of personal responsibility and commitment to *principles of fairness and justice* as a motivating factor for their higher education leadership work. Thirteen of the twenty participants emphasized this personal commitment as a key driver of their work. For example, one participant stated:

> I think what drives me is just the basic fairness. I don't want to see people omitted from the equation, I don't want to see people mistreated. I'm really worried about people whose lack of resources in the university has them really struggling, they can't quite make it because they don't have the support they have to have.

Another participant discussed a similar concern for fairness and justice:

> I've got a very strong sense of social justice and when I see the inequities that are evolving in the communities and I'm in a position where I can invest to try to do something about it in the best way that I have at my fingerprints to leverage support, then I've got a responsibility to do that.

These types of statements present the primary driver of fairness and justice as a form of moral obligation – simply "the right thing to do". Based in part in an awareness of the stark contrast between the quality of life and opportunities for success for privileged and non-privileged people in our society, the participants shared a common desire to use their

leadership role to create a more just and fair world on their campus and in society as a whole.

The second most frequently identified motivational driver is a specific emphasis on a *personal commitment to equity and access*, with thirteen participants identifying it as an influence on their diversity work and ten of the thirteen indicating concerns about equity and access as a primary driver of their diversity efforts. One participant focused on the need to provide opportunities to access education and ensure a quality experience:

> It's going to be important for me to look back and think that every individual had equal opportunity for both quality and equity, and the environment that we created to give access to college gave them every fighting chance to complete college with a degree. And really make that degree a cumulative life changing experience that defines who you are and what you've become.

Another participant viewed this interest as a key leadership responsibility:

> When I think about being able to make a difference at an institution as a leader, it seems to me [that] one of the most important things we can do is to open the doors more and more to people of all different types of backgrounds, especially groups that have historically been excluded or under-represented in higher education. To me, that's what equal opportunity and access are all about.

A common theme of personal responsibility to provide universal access to education is evident among the study participants. They consistently emphasized the need to ensure access and equity for "everybody, regardless of circumstance, regardless of where they start" and considered it a priority for a president to see that his institution serves all people.

The third most influential general principle identified by twelve participants, with seven participants indicating it as a key driver of their work, is a strong belief in the *educational benefits of diversity*:

> Diversity and inclusion in education and higher education is critical. . . . it seems to me that no education, personal or otherwise, can be complete without understanding people who are different from you. It seems to me that an education without understanding people who may be different, and bring different perspectives, different life experiences, cultural experiences, is an education that is incomplete.

Another participant expanded the issue to include broader social aspects of the higher education experience:

> This is something that is crucial. I think we're doing unimaginable disservice to our students if we bring them into institutions and we don't present a clear sense of their being part of a bigger world that is different, and differences that are exciting and worth looking at. And if we have students that come into our institutions and leave comfortable with homogeneity, I think we've done them a tremendous disservice.

Participants frequently emphasized a connection between diversity, excellence and the fundamental mission of higher education. They consistently expressed a belief that diversity contributes to educational and organizational excellence and benefits everyone, not just diverse populations, by improving the overall learning environment.

In addition, participants identified seven other general factors to a slightly lesser degree, with just as many participants identifying these factors as drivers of their work,

but fewer leaders considering these factors as primary drivers. Nearly two-thirds of participants indicated that their diversity work relates to concerns about: *systemic bias* in existing tools, processes and programs; diversity issues involved in the *achievement and opportunity gaps*; *demographic data and research studies* that document the growing diversity and population changes; and the need to provide a truly *welcoming and inclusive campus environment*. About a fourth of participants considered these factors as key drivers of their motivation for diversity and social justice work.

> The changes that are occurring in the demography of our country are so big and the educational attainment gaps are so large, if we have any hope of successfully competing against these other countries that are growing both their post-secondary level and their economy so quickly on a very high tech basis, we have to bring all of our citizens into that process . . . every single person is going to be even more important to us.

Many participants emphasized the need to focus on diversity to address the growing educational and social gaps in society:

> If we leave people behind, groups of people, we're in deep trouble. And I worry about that, I worry about achievement gaps, I worry about income gaps. To me, the silver bullet is education. . . . we've got to raise all these boats, we've got drive it, we've got to close this gap and create a middle-income group.

In some cases, participants emphasized the critical urgency of the situation:

> If we don't deal with this income stratification that is existing out there, and the sense of hopelessness that is building in our urban areas, and frankly in some of our rural areas as well, then we are going to see the 60's riots again . . . what kind

> of life are we creating for ourselves and for our communities if we are just creating one that is full of divisiveness? And lack of opportunity?

A college president has the opportunity and responsibility to ensure that his institution provides a welcoming environment for all, and study participants shared a concern that people from minority and marginalized groups must feel welcomed and accepted on campus. To close the opportunity, achievement and income gaps increasingly present in society, study participants emphasized that higher education must attract, retain and graduate more people from all areas and levels of society.

The practical realities of being a higher education leader today also motivate study participants, with eleven participants reporting that attention to diversity, equity and inclusion issues is simply a *necessary priority* for a contemporary higher education leader today:

> It fundamentally comes with the territory. Absolutely, part of the role of a leader of any organization is to recognize the importance of equity, social justice and all the fundamental principles of enveloping respectful relationships among the people. There's a responsibility to work with them and support them.

For a majority of study participants, a focus on diversity issues is as important as academic and financial responsibilities for a successful college president today. As one study participant stated: "You have to do it. If you are not, you shouldn't be a chancellor or president in the 21st century."

In addition, eight participants reported a sense of responsibility to develop or maintain an *institutional reputation* for diversity, along with a belief in the *importance of educational attainment for all* as a key aspect of maintaining a truly democratic society:

> I think there's a fundamental pillar of democracy that's education. . . . these things are starting to mix with that for me. The good of the country, good of democracy, good of the world. It really starts to become more than just diversifying and equity in education. It's more than that, and that's become very important to me.

Some participants viewed higher education's struggle to meet the needs of diverse populations as evidence of a racial divide in our democratic social structure:

> American higher education was once the greatest engine of opportunity, when immigrants were coming here after World War II, and the GI Bill. I think we've lost some of that . . . if we lose it permanently, I think it's devastating for the narrative about what American higher education is to be. It's a painful fact that part of the reason why that might have changed is that after World War II, most of the people that were being lifted up were low-income white European immigrants. Now it's people of color that need to be lifted up and higher education hasn't been able to do that in the same way.

Although higher education has long been considered a key vehicle for opportunity and advancement, study participants expressed concern that "if we're not careful and thoughtful, we could become engines of inequality [and] exacerbate existing inequities if we aren't intentional in our efforts". Study participants also described a responsibility to build their institution's reputation for diversity and inclusion, in part because that commitment has become a key criterion for assessing an institution and evaluating a campus educational experience.

The study data clearly show that the primary motivation for study participants' work for diversity, equity and inclusion comes from a strong set of personal principles

and beliefs. Across the board, participants share a commitment to principles of fairness, justice, equity and access as well as a common belief in the educational benefits of diversity. They often described this commitment as a personal obligation to 'do the right thing' as well as a requirement of education and an integral part of the moral and ethical responsibilities for a higher education leader today. Study participants also emphasized the connection between these principles and the democratic foundation of American society, with particular concern for doing their part to ensure that education plays a key role in helping to provide social equality. In addition, at the most basic level, study participants viewed support for and promotion of diversity as an essential responsibility of a higher education leader today.

Life Experience

The shared commitment to key principles and beliefs related to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice did not simply spring up in the minds and souls of the study participants – these internal drivers developed in large part from external influences in the form of life events and experiences for each study participant. This study focuses on exploring specific aspects of life experience that encouraged study participants to develop the personal commitments and beliefs described above. Did these leaders share common life experiences that served as key influences on their leadership work for diversity or social justice?

The greatest influence from life experience lies in two general areas: earlier professional work and relationships with others, especially parents, key mentors and colleagues. Sixteen participants indicated that activities and experiences in their *earlier*

professional positions helped develop their commitment to diversity work, with eleven of the sixteen identifying this factor as a key driver of their efforts:

> I was seeing a lot of students of color on our academic probation, a way high percent relative to the population of students. And so I started trying to understand, what are the challenges these students are facing, what's going on here. . . . that led me to a whole set of other interests around holistic student experiences.

Participants often referred to their classroom experiences as key influences on their growing awareness of diversity issues:

> In my own teaching, I have seen the educational benefits of diversity. It's been very powerful to witness in the classroom as well as outside the classroom. I have to say that my own experience, not just as an administrator but also as a teacher in the classroom, has really made an impact on me to understand why this is so important and valuable.

In many cases, direct experiences with the needs and challenges of minority students and faculty as a department chair, dean or mid-level administrator created initial awareness and recognition of issues that had not been in the forefront of these leaders' minds. The participants described early experiences that created concern about why some challenges and problems exist for non-white students and faculty, prompting curiosity about what the institution could do to better address those issues. In many cases, colleagues who were more actively engaged in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts also helped participants recognize the significance of the problems and sparked an initial passion to become more involved and try to make a positive difference.

It is significant that seventeen participants reported that their *upbringing, home life and influence of immediate family members* played a key role in their commitment to diversity, with ten participants identifying their upbringing as a primary driver of their diversity interests.

> I remember conversations at home. Dad wanted me to meet diverse people, diverse tradesmen. I remember the cabinetmaker . . . was African-American, and [Dad] wanted me to get to know him. . . . I remember my mother talking about [the civil rights movement], that it was the right thing, it just needed to be corrected. I remember my father feeling badly about the Japanese internment camps, picking up people, literally coming to take them away. That was wrong and he knew it was wrong, but he didn't do anything and he felt bad about it. I remember these conversations were there.

In addition, twelve participants specifically mentioned their *parents* as influences on their diversity commitment, with ten indicating it as a primary driver of their commitment to diversity:

> I think it probably started with my father and my mother who were both in education. . . . they were very liberal, particularly on issues of race. I grew up in a household where Martin Luther King was a hero within the family . . . my parents both saw issues of diversity as very important and pushed for inclusion. My dad . . . mentored a lot of his African American athletes. He pushed them to go to college even when they didn't think they were capable of doing it. He did those kinds of things and I certainly saw it from the time I was very young . . . I got a lot of positive influence from my parents.

In some cases, the professions and activities of parents directly influenced study participants; in other instances, lessons conveyed by family members had great impact. Study participants frequently mentioned values directly related to core beliefs and principles of diversity that can be traced back to their upbringing. A few participants also described a conscious desire to try to live up to the standards and expectation of their parents in their life and work. It is evident that many of the study participants benefited from growing up in a supportive and caring family environment that helped instill an awareness of inequality and injustice related to the leaders' later interest and involvement in diversity work.

Twelve participants also identified *non-family individuals* as key influences on their diversity work, with nine indicating this experience as a primary influence. Examples of influential non-family individuals include important social figures involved in diversity work and social movements, professional colleagues, mentors, colleagues from a diverse range of backgrounds, faculty from undergraduate and graduate school, and close friends:

> I don't really remember this, but my parents tell me this story. When I was about four, I was afraid of black people . . . growing up in a neighborhood that was entirely white, the only black people I saw were in the Tarzan movies I watched on TV, and they were always chasing Tarzan with spears. [My parents] were terrified that I was developing a negative view of another race based on what I was seeing on TV. The fortunate thing is my dad was coaching at the time and he had one African-American player [who was] the best player and one of the nicest guys. He started having me hang around with [him], and [he] had a huge

> influence on me as a kid. . . . I started to realize that yes, there were differences certainly in the way that we looked, but they were not differences necessarily in who we were . . . he could be a fantastic person even if he was of a different race. For me, that was probably one of the important events. I understood there were differences, but the differences were not what I saw on TV. That was probably the first kind of moment of race in my life.

In a few cases, study participants reported that negative role models also had a significant influence on their leadership behavior: "I learned by watching things that I found distasteful. . . . I got too close to things I didn't like and decided to behave differently." In general, however, participants consistently described the positive influence of mentors, colleagues and friends who provided them with ideas and practices that shaped their view of a diverse world and their place in it.

Most of these key influences were experiential in nature and very emotional at times, often involving instances of discrimination, harassment and exclusion directly experienced by participants or witnessed by observing others. Sometimes these experiences had significant immediate impact; in other cases, the experiences prompted curiosity and questions to explore later in life and career. While parents often influenced the study participants' interest in diversity, they were also influenced by role models, mentors and colleagues who were directly impacted by discrimination as members of marginalized groups or were actively engaged in diversity, equity and social justice activities. These experiences and interactions produced two key effects on study participants: awareness of the impact of discrimination, racism and injustice on others, and initial development of personal values and principles upon which the participants

would build a career and life work marked by a passion for diversity and social justice issues.

Summary of Motivating Influences

The factors that motivate inclusive white male leaders (IWMLs) to engage in diversity work consist of two types: *internal personal influences*, such as principles, values or beliefs, and *external environmental influences,* such as the context of their upbringing, education and work or influences in the world around the study participants. Of the nine influences identified as most important by study participants, four influences are internal or personal and five are external or environmental. Three of the top five influences are personal internal drivers: a sense of personal responsibility and commitment to principles of fairness and justice; a sense of personal commitment to equity and access; and a sense of personal drive and passion for diversity, equity and inclusion work. The remaining two of the top five primary influences are external or environmental factors: the influence of earlier professional experiences and the influence of upbringing and immediate family, especially parental influence. Additional influence also came from non-family members like role models and mentors.

One study participant noted the critical value of these types of life experiences: "I just wonder if . . . people who haven't had [these types of] experiences, the good fortune that I had of having experienced it growing up . . . whether they will feel the same passion?" Many of these experiences involved conditions and opportunities that might not be available to everyone, such as study abroad, international travel, educational and extra-curricular opportunities in high school and college, access to activist role models and a stable home environment with engaged and caring parents. While the study

participants came from a range of socio-economic levels and social settings, most of them described life experiences that reflect aspects of privileged circumstances in some fashion, especially in comparison to the experiences of the marginalized people and groups that these leaders aspire to help and serve in their career work.

Motivation Theory

The study findings on IWML motivation show the dominating influence of study participants' life and work experiences and the influence of their personal relationships with parents, family and non-family members. These external influences in turn inspired the development of key internal drivers in the form of personal beliefs, convictions and values based in principles of fairness, justice, equity and access. A key question to consider at this point is: how do these findings compare with relevant research and theory?

Markus' Theory of Self-knowledge

Markus' (1983, 1986) theory of self-knowledge and self-schemas provides insight into how the primary motivating influences identified by study participants inspired their work as inclusive white male leaders (IWMLs). Markus asserted that self-knowledge develops from conscious selection of information drawn from life experiences, which in turn creates "knowledge structures about the self", termed self-schemas or schemata (Markus, 1983, p. 547). According to Markus, self-schemas largely derive from social interactions with others and are selectively constructed "from past experiences in a particular domain" that reflect personal concerns of "enduring saliences and investment" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955). The participants in this study support this theory through a variety of accounts that document how their early life experiences initiated a

sense of identity as an increasingly sensitized individual interested in diversity and related issues of identity, race and privilege. As Markus' research documented, this identity came about in part through selective consideration by study participants of their life experiences and personal interactions with others:

> I think it first really hit me when I started to get into student leadership roles . . . when I was in sixth, seventh, eighth grade and then through high school. Just because I was a white male and tall, it was far easier for me to get elected than if I wasn't. I started to recognize the advantages I have because of the way I look, and because of my gender and all of those things. . . . I remember that when I got elected Student Council treasurer at the end of my freshman year in high school, I ran against a female candidate who had so much more experience than I did. I had no business beating her and that kind of stuck with me that it somehow wasn't fair to her. . . . I noticed that many times after that, and I continued to notice that even when I was going through college. In the history of my university, I think there had only maybe been one female president of student government . . . I think since me there haven't been very many. To me, that is kind of interesting, how difficult it is [for] a female moving into leadership roles, [and] understanding as a white male what it allowed me to do, and also the opportunities I get. I think I also started to realize that with those opportunities there is also an obligation . . . to mentor others, to provide them with opportunities, sometimes allowing them to chair a committee or get an opportunity that will open up doors for them later on. I became aware of that back when I was in high school and college.

Some participants described how their interest in diversity issues evolved in stages with each advancement in their career:

> When I was just running a department, or when I was just doing my research, [diversity] was not a big deal. It should have been, in retrospect, there were a lot of opportunities where I could have done more to diversify the faculty but this just wasn't on my radar. But when I started getting more responsibility, I started seeing how much the institution influences all of this. As a department chair, I would say I was a little bit aware of it, and then we had some incidents. We had a handful of black graduate students and there would be a crime somewhere, and somebody would send something out saying, 'there's a black male that you should be watching out for' and all these guys would show up in my office. Those are the experiences where you start to realize you need to do something. Being a dean, by that point it was very, very important. [Then, as a top executive], of course, I dealt with all kinds of things. . . . in retrospect now . . . I wish I had done more . . . that's something that I think about a lot . . . when I left [my last institution] there were a lot of people who didn't want me to leave. There was a rally for me and . . . a leader of the black student movement got up and gave a speech about how [they] didn't want me to leave. I was surprised when that happened. . . . that's kind of stuck with me, I would say. It's part of why I amped things up a little more when I came here. . . . I realized that I needed to do that. I would say that [before], I was mostly responding. I guess one of the things that I learned is that I was doing an okay job of that, maybe better than I either thought or frankly deserved, given the fact that I wasn't really thinking

> about it as much as I should have. . . . when I got here, I was going around telling everybody there are three things I'm going to work on, and [diversity] was at the top of the list.

These accounts are just two examples of reports by study participants that support Markus' theory by indicating the development of self-schemas that influenced formation of an inclusive identity through selective consideration of critical life experiences and interactions with key people and groups.

Interactions with Others

Existing research also documents the influence of interactions with others as a key factor in the development of an inclusive leader's identity, with the majority of impactful experiences typically involving some form of interaction with other people (Bruner, 1995; Erikson, 2007; Markus, 2010; Markus & Nurius, 1986; McKinney, 2005). One of the key identity theories most relevant to the development of IWMLs is *possible selves* theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) which asserted that an individual creates a possible self as a form of future identity that acts as a 'personalized carrier' of aspirations and motives, in turn serving as an incentive for current and future behavior. Erikson (2007) modified this theory to emphasize the impact of the social and cultural context for an individual, making possible selves "largely about situations in which we interact with others" (Erikson, p. 354). Erikson was also heavily influenced by the concept of *intersubjectivity* (Bruner, 1995) that emphasized the creation of mutual understanding of exchanges and events through social interaction and communication.

The study participants, however, did not provide evidence to support possible selves as a motivator for their diversity work. As a whole, they resisted efforts to frame

their diversity work as a conscious effort to develop an identity as an IWML in the past, present or future. Although their commitment to diversity and principles of fairness and justice resulted in an identity and reputation as an inclusive leader, participants did not consciously aspire to develop that identity:

> There's no question that I'm very purposeful in how I carry myself and, indeed, in the decisions I make. But is it just because I'm trying to identify my own identity as a higher education leader, or is it because I would do the same thing no matter what role I was in? . . . Have I consciously worked to develop this type of identity? I wouldn't say it's about me, but I have worked very hard to make sure that certain principles and values are part of the decision making within the roles that I've been in in leadership of higher education, whether that is as a program director, or a dean, or vice president, or indeed now as president. In my career, throughout these different administrative roles, a constant for me is a set of values that are part of who I am . . . as I've learned and grown, I've taken on different ways and approaches and invested in different ways to ensure that I'm continually evolving, growing, learning to provide the best leadership that I think is appropriate given those personal beliefs.

A number of participants acknowledged some consideration of future roles, both early in their career and in the present, and at times looking ahead to what they will do after serving as president or chancellor; however, there was minimal evidence of consciously working toward a future identity as an inclusive leader with a specific focus on diversity. In most cases, their inclusive identity evolved in parallel with their developing awareness and growing opportunities for involvement in diversity issues that came up along their

career path. Some participants also reported consideration of a possible negative form of future self from mistakes in their decisions and actions related to diversity and social justice issues that could damage their reputation as a leader if not handled correctly.

On a related note, some participants indicated a desire to inspire a form of possible selves in others. They reported a conscious interest in how they can use their influence as an inclusive leader to encourage others, especially students and people from under-represented groups in the community, to envision a future self that could be more successful by going to college:

> No matter what color you are, you are as worthy as anybody else. You should have . . . not only the [same] opportunity, I would expect that you would have the same success because I fundamentally believe that everyone has the capability to succeed . . . even with people with significant disabilities or significant cognitive disabilities, we tend to undersell what they can do. Because we undersell it, that's all they end up doing. I see people over and over and over and over, rise to expectations. If you have high expectations, you are going to get high results, and I believe every single person, regardless of color, can in fact achieve. My job is to remove as many barriers as possible and provide as much assistance as I can, as they need - not more than what they need - so they can walk away from here independent, knowing how to navigate in the world in which we live today, and navigate or bring about change in ways that will be more consistent with how we would like to see the world.

In addition, some study participants presented another aspect of possible selves in their focus on creating a future vision for their institution. They frequently mentioned a desire

to help their institution achieve a future state that will be more inclusive and accessible to a broader range of students – a kind of 'institutional possible self'.

Life Experiences

Study participants described life experiences as a key source of motivation to become active in diversity work, beginning with their upbringing and youth, through their high school and college years, and into their early academic and professional career. Relevant research in this area includes a focus on the importance of specific critical life events, termed crucibles (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Kendall, 2006) or turning points and epiphanies (McKinney, 2005). Bennis and Thomas' (2002) concept of crucibles was developed to explain how unplanned, often traumatic life events act as transformative experiences inspiring deep reflection that produce a new sense of identity and altered perception of the affected leader's place in the world. Kendall (2006) extended crucible theory to apply it to how white people are motivated to develop an altered sense of personal identity that recognizes the significance of their racial status and inspires work to drive social change, often through developing personal relationships with non-privileged people. McKinney (2005) proposed the concept of turning points and epiphanies as key experiences that offer similar motivation for reflection and identity change in white people, especially through situations in which white people find themselves in settings where they are a minority, situations often first experienced through travel or relocation to a new environment.

Study participants reported a variety of life experiences that align with these three theories, supporting a view that inclusive white male leaders develop an interest in diversity issues in part as the result of *specific critical life experiences*:

> I came from a family [where] my father was an alcoholic, so we were not doing all that well. We never owned a home, we never really owned a car. In my time in high school, we lived in nine different places, including public housing. I think there is something inherently good about being from a socioeconomic status that was lower middle class, and I probably carried that with me in the sense of . . . it wasn't real comforting, it was embarrassing [at times]. I had a couple of friends, one who was a really good athlete. He was always quick to kind of step in if one of my buddies was going to pick on me because of the behavior of my father. I admired that deeply, and I think I carried that with me that I was not going to be a person that was going to engage in being part of the pack that wanted to beat up on someone else. Matter of fact, I went the other direction - I was going to remind people.

Study participants often described these events as "sensitizing" experiences that created a heightened awareness of injustice and discrimination from the impact of being perceived as different, along with an enduring memory of the feelings experienced during those moments. The descriptions of these experiences often included feelings of empathy and compassion for oppressed others as well as a desire to prevent those kinds of experiences from happening to others – providing a potential starting point for an inclusive white male leader.

Research also indicates that the impact of life experience can depend as much on *when it occurs* as what actually happens during a life event (Borstein, 1989; Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Theories of 'sensitive periods' focus on specific life stages when an individual is at a point of personal development or a psychological state that makes a

person more susceptible to influences from life experiences (Bornstein, 1989). While this theory asserted that an experience can actually have greater meaning later in life than at the moment when it actually occurs, the primary significance of the experience was believed to be tied to *when* it takes place – if the same event occurred at another point in an individual's life, it may not have had the same impact and meaning for the individual. In addition, when an individual recalls past experiences is also a significant factor in how past life events affect present perceptions, behavior and actions, including the importance of conditions at the point in time when an individual recalls or applies a past life event to an immediate situation (Murphy & Johnson, 2011).

Study participants provided support for theories that assert the timing of life experiences increases the impact of events on later development. In some cases, for example, study participants indicated that experiences from their *youth* had special impact on their interest and involvement in diversity efforts:

> My best friend [in high school] was . . . Latino. [He] lived with his brothers and sisters in an upstairs apartment . . . that by any standard would be very very low-income. They were supported by their mother, his father was in prison, and the mother . . . was a cook at a local restaurant. I can't tell you how many nights I spent sleeping over at [their] house with [his mother] always making room for me, always happy to provide food. I was a part of the family, any way you looked at it, they treated me like I was part of the family. That whole experience, as I continued to go on to college and military and into work, helped really shape my thinking about how can people characterize people simply because they are low income or they have had certain things happen with their parents, that they are

> any different from the rest of us? That their dreams are any different? I just felt a very special kinship to them. So that experience of being accepted for who I was and my ability to accept them for who they were, and the experiences that they had, I think was a very important shaping experience for me. . . . I knew that not everyone might accept [them] in the same way that I did, but I don't think I ever saw the kind of animosity directed toward them that in later life I saw directed at people who were just like them, or in circumstances just like them. It really did affect my view about fairness and equity.

A majority of study participants recounted experiences from their youth that had lasting impact on them and influenced their personal commitment to equity, fairness and justice. Whether it was the impact of watching television reports of civil rights events, or a first experience with the impact of racial slurs, or simply realizing they were different from others, study participants frequently described lasting memories of early experiences that directly relate to their active interest and commitment to diversity and social justice much later in life.

Study participants also reported that the *early stages of their career* were a particularly significant point in their life for developing interest and awareness of diversity issues:

> I would say I've gotten more and more focused on this the last ten years or so. My first part of my time in academia when I [worked as a] faculty member, I didn't know the first thing about academic politics or any of this stuff. . . . I didn't get involved in any of this stuff until after I went into the main part of administration. . . . I didn't really start thinking about politics or identity or

> anything like that until I decided I wanted to go into administration and realized this was an important part of it . . . the first time I interviewed for a dean's job and somebody asked me the diversity question, I gave a really bad answer. That was when I realized I better form some ideas about this. Ever since then, I've kind of been on this journey . . . bringing those experiences to a different [institution] is when I'd say I kind of recommitted to the whole thing. One of the decisions I made when I came here was . . . I would be able to be a little more outspoken about my interests.

For some participants, early experiences with issues of racism and student activism got their attention:

> I was a very painfully young and naïve associate dean. . . . you remember '67-68 was called 'the times of the troubles' on the campuses? It was really interesting to me at [our institution] that the anti-war movement was really, really fired up and had almost no black participation. That did not mean that the African American students were inactive. They were in fact very active, but they had other issues . . . the fundamental issue [for them] was racial segregation in housing, [they] were determined to end racial segregation in housing, especially in the Greek system. They had been complaining about this forever, I guess, so I watched that movement develop literally parallel to the anti-war movement. When I say parallel, I mean they were not going to meet. And the African American students [decided] they were going to disrupt a [high profile] annual event. . . . they were so adamant that the administration do something about this segregated housing that they marched on and took [over the site of the event].

> And they were prepared to disrupt it in all kinds of really very nasty ways . . . ultimately I negotiated a settlement [but] that could have turned into something incredibly ugly. I will tell you as a thirty year old, very junior administrator, that really got my attention about the need for more understanding of African American students and their needs.

For many study participants, their first professional roles put them in new environments that challenged their identity and view of the world or presented challenges and responsibilities that provided a valuable learning experience. Their early career work helped them develop a greater awareness and understanding of diversity issues as well as build recognition of the need to address those issues as part of their job responsibilities and evolving leadership work.

Study participants also reported key points in their life and career when they *looked back on life events and experiences* that helped shape them, at times finding more meaning through later reflection than at the moment of immediate experience:

> When I first got to college, I'm not sure that I fully appreciated what an important part of the learning environment it was to have students from different backgrounds. But as I reflected on it, after I'd started my professional career, I realized that experience really caused me to re-examine a lot of my assumptions, to think more broadly about a lot of issues, to recognize that not everybody had the same kind of life experience or upbringing that I had. The world was a much, much bigger place than where I'd grown up. It's the kind of thing I think you appreciate more over time as you reflect on it. . . . I may not have been able to

> articulate that as well when I was a student at the time. Now that I look back on it, I can see it.

Study participants often reported instances when present circumstances remind them of an earlier experience that gained greater meaning in hindsight. In some instances, they described how earlier events or behavior in their life influenced their thinking and actions. A number of study participants mentioned that the experience of the interview for this study offered them an opportunity to recall forgotten aspects of their life that provide meaning for them today.

Study participants also reported the influence of the *broader context of higher education*, often causing them to consider the context and timing of their leadership efforts related to diversity. They were very aware of what happens on other campuses, including the apparent missteps of other white male leaders:

> After the eruption at [the University of Missouri] last November . . . I stepped up my engagement with minority groups on campus. I met with a group of faculty, minority faculty leaders. I met with the Association of Black Collegians, the main group of black students on campus. We had some very constructive discussions.

Study participants reported that they learned what not to do as well as what they should do by monitoring other institutions, displaying a conscious sensibility that their diversity work is informed by as well as compared with related activities and issues at other campuses.

Finally, Latino (2010) proposed three themes in key life experiences that encourage the development of inclusive white administrators: *exposure to racial diversity*

influences understanding of racial differences; direct experiences creating *intersections of identity* prompt "recognition and understanding of discrimination"; and *experiences with mentors and other personal relationships* present "a more inclusive racial worldview" (p. 97). Study participants provided evidence to support Latino's assertion of the importance of these themes, indicating that experience in one or more of these areas helped them develop as inclusive leaders:

> That really booted it up [for me], when the black students were telling me . . . that I couldn't possibly understand what their life experiences were like. . . . it was no longer a matter of color or gender denoting something – you're girl, I'm boy, or you are black and I am white – as it was a matter of forcing people to understand, including me, that there is not only simple minded connotative meaning to these things, there is multi-dimensional connotative meaning to those things too, and I think most people don't get it.

Some participants described valuable learning experiences with staff members who were different from them:

> I've got great professionals around me that I rely on . . . I enjoy learning so I pick their brains. [One staff member] is a lesbian with a very proactive queer perspective where it's all on advocacy. So I'll pick her brain a lot just to figure out what's in her head. What's most interesting is she has had a hard time establishing credibility as a homosexual within our ethnic student population. They can't ascribe to her anything but privilege as a white female. . . . that's been a real lesson to me, understanding that a white, middle-aged bald heterosexual male is perceived one direction, in contrast to your thirty something lesbian

> progressive advocate for homosexual rights. It's been very fascinating. . . . I've got a much higher degree of appreciation that everybody kind of has to find their own self . . . [and] especially in this generation, there is a lot of identity crisis going on.

The importance of experiential learning is rooted in Latino's three themes and the study findings indicate that direct experience with a diverse range of people and exposure to multiple worldviews is a critical factor in the development of inclusive white male leaders.

Personal Narrative

The literature also contained considerable research on the *use of personal narrative and story-telling* by individuals to help them make sense of how their identity and interests have evolved to their current state, often through reflection on their life experiences (Erikson, 2007; Ligon, et al, 2008; Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Story telling is also used to convey a vision for an institution or to build support for an objective or goal (Crosby& Bryson, 2005), or to tell a story about what may be possible in a future imagined end state (Erikson, 2007). In many cases, personal narratives consist of life stories that are "created, told, revised and retold" to create understanding or meaning for present actions and initiatives, at times illustrating or supporting underlying themes or principles (Shamir & Eilam, p. 402).

In general, study participants provided minimal evidence of the active use of narrative or story telling as a deliberate means to present their case for diversity, equity and inclusion on their campus. There were numerous instances, however, when participants looked back on their life experiences through a form of personal narrative to

make sense of their life and understand their evolving views and feelings about identity, race and privilege issues. They also used personal stories to convey their thoughts about diversity issues, especially as part of the interview process:

> I talked to a young lady [who] was the first in her family to graduate . . . I [asked her], 'What are you going to do?' She said . . . 'I've got an opportunity with a management-training program . . . but I'm headed for New York or L. A. . . . I'm going to go out and make that difference.' I said, 'I bet your family is excited', and she said, 'They are bringing two van loads' . . . you know our racial stereotypes, our sense of where kids are coming from and what their aspirations are? When you talk to these kids, regardless of their race or gender, their preference, and they are going to get out and be world-beaters, that's what it's about.

Participants also used student stories to support diversity efforts with faculty and staff:

> At a university gathering, I asked a group of African American students, 'Tell me about an experience in your life where you [were in] an environment where you felt safe and welcome and empowered'. . . . one young man said it was at his church, and I said, 'Why did you feel that, what was it about your church?' And he said, 'They created an environment where it was ok to be imperfect'. . . . I shared that [later at] a large gathering of faculty and administrators and others, because to me that was one of those little insightful moments. It made me realize that is one aspect that unites us as human beings, right? We've got different skin, some of us have more money than others, but we are all imperfect. . . . I just remembered it, and I share it because it's an interesting exchange, and it showed

> me that going to those events, having those conversations, asking open ended questions and just listening - one, builds relationships, and two, actually can make you smarter.

Most often, participants' stories related to specific life lessons that still carried significant meaning much later in life:

> One Easter we took a drive down to New Orleans. Easter Sunday, we'd been in a hotel room and Mom and Dad had our Easter baskets, and we did a little search around the hotel room and got our bags of those little 'ten for a penny' candies. As we drove, we stopped at some local Lutheran church, and as we drove further we stopped [to visit] a family in a house that had a dirt floor, an all-black family, not a lot of money. Dad was like that, we just stop in and have a visit. . . . the conversation was very genial, very friendly people. But they had nothing, so all of our candy stayed at that house. All of us were very willing to part with all of that candy because we saw the conditions . . . we weren't exactly a wealthy family, but we saw that there was a family that had much, much less than us. I remember that story as a kid, grade five.

These examples of life experiences were presented in a way that included a clear lesson at the time when the experience occurred and at the moment of retelling. These stories provided a powerful way to describe the experiences and life lessons that inspired or reinforced each leader's interest and commitment to equity, inclusion and social justice. While critical issues of diversity were present, the personal emotional impact of each story was especially significant in terms of the overall effect that the experiences had on each leader.

Summary of Study Data Compared to Motivation Theories

Study participants provided evidence to support a considerable amount of existing research related to motivation, including: self-knowledge and schemas (Markus,1983); significance of interactions with other people (Bruner, 1995; Erikson, 2007; Markus, 2010; Markus & Nurius, 1986; McKinney, 2005); impact of key life experiences on identity development and awareness of identity, race and privilege (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Kendall, 2006; McKinney, 2005); timing of key life experiences (Borstein, 1989; Murphy & Johnson, 2011); key themes of life experience that impact development of inclusive white leaders (Latino, 2010); and the role of personal narrative and story-telling by inclusive white male leaders (Crosby& Bryson, 2005; Erikson, 2007; Ligon, et al, 2008; Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

To a great degree, the study findings support theory that inclusive white male leaders (IWMLs) develop identities or self-schemas **(**Markus, 1983) related to development of an inclusive identity, largely through selective consideration and interpretation of life experiences and interactions with key people and groups. The study data also document the impact of life experiences as important influences on identity development and an evolving interest in diversity, identity, race and privilege issues, particularly through critical interactions with other people (Bruner, 1995; Erikson, 2007; Markus, 2010; Markus & Nurius, 1986; McKinney, 2005). Study participants often spoke of the impact of specific events and life experiences during their youth, high school and college years, and early career stages as well, providing support for theories related to critical life events in the form of crucibles, turning points and epiphanies (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Kendall, 2006; McKinney, 2005), although few if any instances involved

significant personal trauma or disruption. In addition, the study data support theories that emphasize the timing of key life events and the importance of "sensitive periods" when a person is especially open to outside influences (Borstein, 1989; Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Study participants also provided evidence that three types of life experiences are especially influential in the development of inclusive white administrators in higher education (Latino, 2010). Specifically, exposure to racial diversity, experiences with intersectional identities, and mentors and other key people play key roles in motivating white males to develop an interest and desire to work toward becoming inclusive leaders with an active interest and engagement in diversity, equity and/or social justice work.

While the study findings provide evidence of the use of personal narrative or story telling by IWMLs, there is only minimal use of this tactic as a way to promote diversity initiatives and issues. Instead, study participants readily use personal narrative and storytelling to reflect on and connect their earlier life experiences to their present activities and views related to diversity, equity and social justice. However, they did not report significant use of storytelling as a method of presenting diversity issues to others. In many cases, narrative provided a way to respond to interview questions, with study participants drawing on life experiences to reflect and explain their responses to questions. They often acknowledged that the interview process prompted them to recall a life event in a way that helped shed light on their personal development, providing evidence of self-discovery and increased understanding that is part of the ongoing development process for the study participants and IWMLs in general.

The study data provide little support for possible selves theory in the sense of study participants reporting a conscious desire to deliberately work toward developing a

future inclusive identity and leadership role. For the most part, study participants presented their inclusive identity more as a product of circumstance, opportunity and even chance rather than a result of conscious aspiration toward a future personal identity. The element of agency, however, is a consistent element in participants' life accounts, with frequent mention of a conscious effort to work toward acting as a deliberate change agent. This focus reflects a general desire to play a role as an impactful and effective leader, but some participants did describe a conscious personal goal or objective related to diversity or social justice initiatives and issues.

The strongest evidence of possible selves theory is present in study participants' focus on how they could help others – especially students – achieve a future possible identity, and how a leader could help move his institution and community toward a future state of greater diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice. These efforts align with aspects of possible selves theory, but rather than being directed inward toward a future form of personal identity or self, study participants reported thinking and behavior aimed more at others than at self. Their focus is consistently on others – a characteristic that emerges as a key aspect of an inclusive leader.

Chapter VI

Analysis of Findings: Awareness and Understanding

Every white male likely encounters some form of challenges and experiences related to his race and identity; this study proposes that inclusive white male leaders (IWMLs) consciously choose to respond to those types of life experiences by taking steps to develop a greater personal understanding of the issues. The second stage of this study focuses on the types of activities IWMLs engage in to develop their understanding of identity, race and privilege. Similar to the analysis of motivation for white male leaders to engage in diversity work, the strategies and activities they employ to develop greater understanding of diversity issues fit into two general categories – *internally oriented activities* and *externally oriented activities.*

It is important to note that most of the reported activities aimed at developing greater understanding are external in nature. Of the thirty activities reported most often by study participants, twenty involve externally oriented practices, particularly interacting with a diverse range of people to gain insight and understanding of self, identities and diversity and social justice issues. In contrast, ten of the activities are internally focused activities, such as focused reading and study of related issues, data and research and various forms of personal reflection on life experiences and the ways that identity and privilege affect self and others.

The primary means used by study participants to develop their understanding of identity and diversity issues involves three main categories of activity: *interactions with other people*; *active learning initiatives*; and *personal reflection*. Just over half of the study participants identified one or more of these three types of activities as key ways to

develop their understanding of diversity, race and identity; nearly as many participants placed primary importance on all three of these types of personal development activities.

In terms of *interactions with others*, participants most frequently identified four types of interpersonal activities that had the greatest impact on their personal development. The two types of activities they mentioned most often were *engaging in 'crucial conversations' with others* about diversity issues, and *deliberately connecting with people* to discuss diversity issues. Fourteen participants indicated that crucial conversations were an important part of the process of developing a greater understanding of diversity issues and experiences of diverse groups of people as well as recognizing their own identity issues. Nine participants indicated crucial conversations were a primary means of developing their understanding of diversity issues.

> I think it was when I went to college that I had more friends that were African American. I think that's where things happened, I had more discussions as you do around a residence hall. One of my good friends that I still stay in touch with was a guy who grew up in [the] inner city . . . he was in the room next to me. We used to talk about issues of race and how it was being an African American at a primarily white institution. We had those discussions regularly for the two years we lived next to each other. I think that [he] probably had a very strong influence on helping me understand what that experience was like, and the need to do some things beyond simply recruiting students . . . things like creating a welcoming environment and retention were [what we] talked about quite a bit. . . . it certainly gave me a perspective on how to deal with the issues, and how to maybe increase diversity on campus, both from a student, faculty, and staff point . . . we talked a

> lot about what we now call micro-aggressions, some of those things people do that I probably wouldn't have understood were offensive, and could have hurt some of my efforts if I hadn't had some of those discussions. . . . I think that helped me in the roles that I've had since then.

Participants also described other types of impactful conversations with colleagues and community leaders:

> I had people I could rely on to give me honest feedback, who I felt were particularly competent with respect to issues of race. People I could say [to], 'Tell me what you think about this. Are we headed in the right direction? What are we missing? If you disagree, tell me what direction you think we should take?' Just really listening to people and being curious about what might be the options that you could consider. . . . often I'd get a call from a community leader and I'd pose those very questions. Sometimes I'd get an unsolicited call to say, 'What are you doing? I'm hearing something and tell me what's going on, it doesn't sound good'. For me, I always thought, well, thank goodness, I have great friends in the community who are willing to call me and ask me if something is as crazy as it sounds. They'd tell me if they thought it was crazy. . . . otherwise you are so insulated. We've all had the occasion where we were sure about something, just absolutely sure, then when seen through the eyes of someone else, someone in particular that we might hold in high esteem, we find we're going in exactly the opposite direction. That may be someone who is an adversary, you learn a lot from your adversaries who might always be saying you are doing it wrong, and you may think they are mistaken, but there may be times

> when they are right. You have to be able to say they are really right, I am going in the wrong direction. Or maybe a blend, it might not be always that black and white. I think really listening to people, your friends, and the folks that you think are not particularly supportive but have a very strong perspective.

Study participants consistently reported that they relied on having difficult conversations with diverse groups of people to develop understanding as well as create relationships and build bridges to the community. These types of conversations and interactions with others often made them question their own views and experiences or provided greater awareness of an issue or concern that they need to address.

In addition to engaging in crucial conversations, study participants also emphasized the importance of simply *connecting with people and listening* to their thoughts as a regular part of their activities to develop greater understanding of diversity and the life experiences of people from diverse backgrounds. Thirteen study participants identified this activity as a regular practice, with nine participants indicating that connecting and listening was a primary learning activity for them. In addition, thirteen participants indicated that they develop their understanding of diversity through *deliberate efforts to spend time with people from diverse backgrounds*, with six participants reporting this activity as a primary method of consciously working to build their diversity awareness.

> One of the things I've learned a lot over the years is not assuming that I know anyone's experience based on their race or gender, because they are all different. Growing up with [African American] friends . . . ['John'] grew up in an entirely white community, his experiences were very different from someone like my

> friend [‘Roy’] who grew up in an entirely African American community. They are the same race, they certainly dealt with some of the same issues of racism throughout their lives, but their experiences have been so very different. Understanding that when I first meet someone, I don’t know if they have had [John’s] experience, or [Roy’s] experience, or something in the middle. And not assuming [anything]. I remember I was actually in a diversity workshop one time and I made the mistake of sitting in the front row. The guy kept talking about how we were told these things by teachers about black people and we were told these things by our parents about black people being lazy. He kept looking at me, and I’m [thinking], that’s not what I experienced, don’t assume you know what I experienced, I didn’t experience that. Growing up in a white community, my teachers never really talked much about issues of race so they certainly didn’t say anything derogatory. My parents were so far away from that, that certainly didn’t happen at home. The same thing is true with others, they may have very different experiences than what I expect they may have had.

Study participants frequently acknowledged the constant learning opportunities available to them through regular interactions with people who were different from them. They emphasized the importance of spending time with a diverse range of people and listening to their stories and experiences as a primary means of developing awareness and understanding of diversity issues.

On a related note, eleven participants reported that they developed their understanding of the life experiences of others in part by *observation,* watching others on

campus and in the community. Seven participants identified observation as a primary means of developing personal understanding of diversity issues:

> When I went to the Dean's office, I had a mentor [who] was lesbian, very willing to help me see things, willing to be gentle. I might say something and she would say, 'Now, let's think about that', you know, that kind of approach. She was very helpful and I worked with her for a number of years . . . I think that she had a lot to do with just kind of opening my mind. . . . I remember sitting with her at a big table [with] lots of leaders at the college and an issue came up, and she made a suggestion. It kind of flew by, then a man made a suggestion, almost identical, not word for word, but very similar. And [the response] was, 'That's a really good idea'. So I talked to her about it later, and I said, 'How did that feel?' And she said, 'That happens all the time'. I thought, isn't that interesting. You know, I'm glad I noticed it . . . it opened my eyes to that kind of experience. And she was very well respected and it still was happening to her. She was a force of nature, and it still was like that [for her] in those quarters.

Learning through observation also included watching other people as they participated in institutional and system processes:

> It became very clear [in executive searches] with respect to both ethnicity and gender, but particularly with respect to gender, that there was an expectation or a threshold for women to meet that men didn't have to meet . . . early in the search process, and even during the initial interview, when we were interviewing the top twelve to fifteen candidates and working to narrow it down to the three or four you were going to bring to campus, it became really clear . . . women had a higher

> standard to achieve than men did. If women were particularly assertive, they were somehow projected as being aggressive instead of assertive, whereas the male was always just assertive. I would see female committee members throw female candidates out and I'd say, 'What is this about? What's the difference between that candidate's resume and this candidate's resume?' There always seemed to be some hidden barrier that would exist for women.

At a more basic level of learning through observation, a number of study participants reported the influence of television news media when they were young, especially in reference to the civil rights movement. Other study participants related how observations of student behavior in the classroom increased their awareness of diversity issues:

> You get these white young men and they say, 'You just gotta work hard . . . it's merit, you work hard, you get a better grade'. And the women go, 'Hey, buddy, let me have a conversation', and the people of color go, 'Hey, wait, buddy, let me tell you about - '. That's when you really start to grapple with it in terms of trying to educate others.

From casual to formal settings and indirect to direct experiences, study participants frequently reported that they developed awareness of diversity, equity and social justice issues in part by simply paying attention to their surroundings and observing the impact of behaviors, policies and practices on others.

In terms of *active learning strategies*, study participants described five types of activities that were important to their personal growth. Eleven participants reported that they *consciously work to be an active learner on a daily basis*, approaching their activities and interactions with an open mind and receptive attitude to seek and learn new

things about diversity as part of their daily routine. Eight participants identified deliberate practices to engage in ongoing daily learning as a primary method of personal development.

> One of the things I liked about that job and that particular institution was that it was a learning experience every day. You just [walked] through the halls and you could meet someone from another country who could teach you something about just about anything. It was the greatest learning laboratory you could ever hope to work in. I think if you're not learning, you're dying, you know? It's just part of what keeps you fresh, and understanding what your own limitations are, what people need.

One participant emphasized that the ongoing process of daily learning should be actively practiced throughout the campus community, regardless of position or role:

> When you have all these students from around the world as well as students that come to us from different cultural experiences, whether it's from the black community or Hispanic community - wow, what a great opportunity to learn. . . . I think we're all capable, if we really do our best, to be continually evolving. . . . all of us ought to be engaged in learning whether we are the president, whether we are engaged in office work, or a cook or custodian, or landscape crew. We're all engaged and hopefully learning something new every day.

Study participants focused most on two key aspects related to daily learning: they worked in the midst of a learning environment with an increasingly diverse population, and their executive position gave them the opportunity for regular interactions with a variety of

people on a daily basis. It is quite evident that the study participants made the most of these daily learning opportunities to help them develop as an inclusive leader.

In a more traditional academic approach to learning, half of the study participants reported that they developed awareness and understanding of diversity issues and best practices in diversity work by *reading articles and books* and *seeking out research* to keep them as informed as possible. Eight participants indicated that reading and studying writings and research on diversity issues was a primary means for them to grow their personal understanding of diversity and identity issues in order to help them in their leadership work and personal development. Half of the study participants also reported regularly *studying data reports and demographic information* to develop their awareness and understanding as well as gather information to develop and support diversity initiatives. Seven participants reported that data and research material was a key resource to build their understanding of diversity issues.

> I would say in the last few years especially, looking closely at data about who succeeds in STEM courses, that's where you really see that stereotype threat is real and that's one of the things that makes it real for me. I look at a lot of those data and it's unmistakable that chemistry and math have ways of teaching that were created when the only people here were white males and it's optimized so that white males are the people who have the greatest chance for success. To me, when you look at that, that is probably as stark a way of looking at all this as there is.

Often the influence of data came about through activities related to academic research:

> I started to read a lot more of that research, particularly when I was in my doctoral program. By the time I became a faculty member, before I even moved into administration, I started having a much better understanding of the social differences and how that relates to people moving into roles – the fact that I know, for example, that a lot of research indicates that males are more likely to think they are more competent than they are, and females are likely to think they are less competent.

Most of the study participants referred to the influence of research and reports on their diversity interests and activities. For a few participants, research and demographic reports were a primary source of their recognition of diversity issues in their leadership role. For others, research data served more to reinforce or shape existing interests and beliefs in the value and impact of diversity issues that originated in earlier life and career experiences.

In terms of more extroverted types of learning, ten participants identified the importance of *life experience* to introduce, reinforce or apply learning about diversity issues as an effective way to develop their understanding, with six indicating that experiential learning was a primary means of personal growth in their diversity journey.

> You can teach all you want, the question is, is anything learned? I don't think you can learn unless it comes from a life experience, otherwise it just becomes talking about it, talking about diversity. I'd be more inclined to create experiences than to teach. The experiences will teach themselves. . . . [it's] learning and creating, throwing things at people and letting them develop their own intentional thoughts about it rather than telling them 'here are the five things you need to do to be a

> diversity supportive leader.' I don't think that's the best way to do it. I'd love to sit down with somebody and design an inclusiveness program for leaders. I think the first thing I'd do is have everybody go abroad to a poor country and spend a couple of weeks experiencing that. That would arguably be money well spent, more than having people read a book or go to a keynote.

A number of participants emphasized the connection between learning and experience, stressing how they complement each other. While an individual can learn from reading or from lessons taught by parents or a teacher, one participant asserted, "I don't think you can learn it just from a book unless it's already part of your value system, and if it is already part of your value system, it's usually because you've had experiences." While most participants indicated that learning can happen though indirect means such as reading or training, many agreed that life experience is what "internalizes" and "crystalizes" learning into deeper meaning and understanding.

On a related note, eleven participants reported the value of *putting themselves in settings where they are a minority participant* to help them be more aware of the kind of experience that is a daily fact for people from under-represented populations. Four participants indicated this type of activity was a primary tactic in their work to build understanding of diversity issues. Many participants reported this type of experience through study abroad programs:

> When you're in a society where you are in the majority, you often take it for granted, right? That's the experience a lot of us have and I never really thought about it. When I went to Japan, I was living with a host family in a suburb of Tokyo. There were no other Caucasians . . . in the area. When I was out walking

> the dog in the neighborhood, kids would come up and giggle and point, sometimes they wanted to touch my hair [and] say the word '*gaijin*' which I learned meant 'foreigner'. So I became very conscious suddenly of my race in particular. It was a very powerful experience, because all of a sudden I was in the minority. It made me realize this is an experience that other people have in the United States all the time that I don't experience. . . . [our institution] has a lot of study abroad programs, and we really promote it strongly to our students as one of the ways in which they can get out of their comfort zones to get a better sense of the fact that there are lots of different types of people and perspectives out there in the world . . . it's a really transformative type of learning experience.

Experience as a minority presence, whether abroad or at home, helped many study participants recognize the limitations of their worldview and revealed some of their assumptions and biases. Participants were quick to emphasize that their minority experiences cannot be equated with the life experience of anyone from a minority group, but the experiences helped them begin to understand and appreciate what it may be like for people of color living in a white majority society.

The third key type of activity practiced by IWMLs to develop their understanding of diversity involves various forms of *reflection*. Thirteen participants indicated that they *consciously reflect on their earlier life experiences* to help them understand what they can learn from those experiences, or how those experiences can help them in their personal development efforts. Nine participants reported that reflections on personal life experiences were a primary means of learning about their own identity and their journey toward becoming an inclusive leader.

> I'm a wealthy white guy [and] my parents were progressive on their scale. My father was always for the candidates who were more for integration [and] my mother integrated [her profession] when I was a kid. . . . but like most people from our income group, we had an African American female who worked in our house and took care of [us], did the cooking and cleaning and everything. She was an important figure in my life, and the racism of black maids and all of that . . . really didn't register with me for a long time. I guess when I really started thinking about it was when I was [in college]. . . . it made me put a lot of pieces together that I'd always thought needed to be connected better. So that certainly is something that motivates me, to kind of make up for the sins that my family had participated in. Not necessarily through overtly bad intentions, I think that's part of what people have to come to terms with when they think through this. My mother integrated [her profession] but she also employed a black maid and paid her eighty dollars a week. So how do both of those things come together in one person? Well, that's the paradox of all of this stuff. . . . I never even thought about the deep significance of any of this stuff until much later.

Study participants emphasized the importance of taking time for reflection: "Some of it is just getting [people] to reflect very consciously on those experiences. . . . helping people see why that was important, what they learn from it, and what they can continue to learn going forward." Since learning from life experiences is often a delayed process, study participants also stressed the critical importance of making a conscious effort to reflect and learn from both past and current experiences as part of the ongoing effort to develop awareness and understanding of diversity and identity issues.

Twelve participants reported that they actively reflected on *challenges faced by others* and considered how their status and life experience as a white male compared to the daily and lifelong challenges of people and groups from different backgrounds. Eight participants indicated that this type of personal reflection played a key role in their work to develop a greater understanding of diversity issues and their own place and role in those issues. In addition, ten participants reported that they consciously reflected on *the significance of identity, race and gender* in society and in their campus environment, with seven participants indicating this type of reflection is a key element in their ongoing work to understand diversity issues.

> In the beginning of my career . . . I was part of [a] government program and part of my job . . . was to audit and look at applications to this [summer] program and find people who had been admitted into the program but didn't have all the proper documentation or should not have been admitted into the program because they weren't, you know, they weren't poor . . . somehow, they were let in. And so I ended up in a position where I can remember I had to talk to the director of that program and say, 'Such and such kid isn't really eligible, they have to be taken out of the program'. And in the end, what I was doing, I was taking these kids who were from families that were just barely over the line of qualifying [as] being impoverished and saying, 'He [or she] can't have a summer job'. And this nonprofit director is begging me, 'Well can't we look at it this way, or can't we look at it that way' . . . and then [I] actually end up working with those kids. It was my job to run the program, and see what they are going through, and what they experience and the variety of things that happen in families, or parts of

> families, or fragmented families, and the challenges that they have. Now, I can give them a great experience for two hours in a day, or five hours in a day, but when they go from there, they're going home and the whole culture is going to be, you know, in contradiction to what I am trying to accomplish. To experience that and to see that, gives you a much better understanding of what challenges not only you face in terms of trying to make social change, but also the challenges that the people themselves face in making those changes. I think that really impacts your thinking in terms of what you can do, and how you should go about doing it. It makes it much more people-centered as opposed to theoretical-centered.

Research shows that reflecting on the life experiences of others with different identities and backgrounds is critical to developing compassion and empathy (Kendall, 2006). While a white male may never truly understand what it is like to be a woman or a member of an under-represented group, the study data indicate that increased awareness of and empathy for challenges faced by others is directly tied to reflection and personal interactions with others who are different.

Study participants also extended that type of reflection to examine their own life. Eleven participants reported that they reflected on the *impact of privilege in their own life* as a way to help them be more aware and empathetic of less advantaged others as well be more sensitive to how they may appear to others in their interactions and leadership work. Only seven participants, however, indicated that this type of reflection was a key aspect of their regular efforts to grow their understanding of self.

> I knew I came from a place of unconditional love, from my family. . . . I saw people around me that didn't have that. And you know, whether it was a white male privilege that I started to recognize, I started to recognize I really had a privilege in the context of the strength that I had in terms of those relationships and support. It wasn't a monetary thing, because there wasn't money to give out. It was just that sort of respect and support and recognition of decisions you make, although they may have given them heartburn a little bit, they knew at the end of the day it was going to be the right thing for me going forward. That was a privilege that I started recognizing as privilege before I started recognizing myself as a white male with privilege.

Some participants explained how awareness of white privilege gradually evolved over time:

> I never took for granted the fact that both my parents were educated, both of them had jobs, they had an opportunity to care for me in ways that I appreciated. I always took that as privilege. Where did I understand that that privilege exceeded and accelerated past a lot of individuals just on the basis of my race? You know, I think there have been times along the journey where that's been more pronounced. Rodney King, you know. I think when racial tension actually raises up to the level that becomes somewhat of a societal consciousness, then it kind of transforms your perspective to 'Wow, this is individualized to me in ways that is not shared by everyone'. But then with this more recent phenomenon, kind of tearing the scabs off that are forty years old, being able to understand that your sense of tolerance and acceptance of inclusivity is really driven by the fact that

> I'm a white male. I always say I am never racist. I'm not. But I can never understand systematic oppression, because the system has never been against me. And that draws a very stark distinction for me in terms of my own individual perspective up against my own individual responsibility.

Often awareness and recognition of the impact of white privilege occurred through looking back and putting the pieces together in hindsight:

> The sneaky thing about white privilege is you don't really even realize you have white privilege until you actually stop to think about it. Most of the time, you don't stop to think about it . . . when I stopped to think about it, it affects me negatively because I'm like, 'Well, I'm not better than anybody else. Why should I be privileged? I earned what it is that I am, so don't tell me I'm privileged and somehow got it'. And the reality is, of course I ended up having opportunities that others didn't have just by virtue that I didn't get labeled as a minority student who probably couldn't learn anything. Obviously I was labeled as a poor kid from a working class family, but that wasn't nearly as negative. . . . I think that for me, there wasn't an 'aha' moment, that 'Oh, wow, look at me, I'm white and I got all this stuff and other people didn't'. I think it was more incremental, it was more from time to time I would, and particularly when I started to raise my children, I realized how much they had that others don't have, because of what I am able to give them, and the experiences that I'm able to give them that others don't have. . . . even in college, I learned all of this stuff, but I never took the time to think about how it impacted me as much as how much I could take from that to help impact others.

It is intriguing to note that the study participants largely framed the concept of privilege in a broad way. Rather than focusing on privilege afforded by their white male identity, participants often reflected on other aspects of their identity and life experience, such as parents and family environment, socioeconomic status, and opportunities in their upbringing. One participant also mentioned the "genetic lottery" that may have bestowed physical attributes upon them and intellectual or cognitive abilities that gave them an advantage over other people due to social and systemic biases and preferences.

Participants also reported other activities to develop their understanding of diversity and identity issues. They placed significant emphasis on *interpersonal activities*, with *family experiences and parental teaching* reported most often by participants. Nine participants identified family and parental teaching as a source of developing understanding of diversity, race and social justice issues, with seven participants reporting it as a primary influence. Nine participants indicated that *open and vulnerable communication with others* about diversity, race and identity issues was influential in their understanding of self and others, while six reported that open, vulnerable communication with others was a critical means of developing understanding of diversity. Eight participants reported that *personal relationships with others* helped them develop a better understanding of diversity, race and identity issues, with six reporting that personal relationships with people of color were a key means of developing a greater understanding of diversity. Nine participants indicated that they used opportunities to *learn from diversity leaders in the community* to build their understanding of diversity issues, with five participants reporting that interactions with diversity leaders in the community played an important role in their increased

understanding of experiences and issues. Eight participants reported that *engaging in active debates about diversity* with members of their leadership team, campus community and external community provided ways to challenge their thinking and develop greater understanding of diversity and race issues, with five indicating that active debate and challenging dialogue with others played a key role in developing their understanding of the issues.

> I grew up in an era where civil rights legislation was passed and there were still lots of race issues in the late ‘60s and '70s, so [my father] would often talk about those issues . . . so I had a better understanding of the differences. He was certainly understanding of not just the differences in how people were treated, but also the opportunities they had. So he probably explained a lot of those things to me early on.

Participants often described how they deliberate worked to connect with others to create learning opportunities:

> I want to make sure that I’m talking to the people that are concerned and dedicated. I attend the meetings of the Cultural Diversity Council. I attend the meetings myself to learn, and I engage with the members of that particular task force, certainly my chief diversity officer and others on the campus and also in the system office. I make sure I talk to them as well as the community. I try to make sure I am continually interacting with the thought leaders and the leaders in general on diversity. . . . I make sure that I’m attached to people who are leaders in the community in this regard.

Some participants described a conscious effort to become a student of others:

> I just have made it a point when I have people that are committed to diversity, whether they are minorities or non-minorities, I try to learn from them as much as I can. I can't say any one person sticks out for me in that arena per se. I've always tried to avail myself of diversity leaders. I have an excellent person who heads our office of equal opportunity now . . . our chief diversity officer. She's teaching me and I'm her student.

Some study participants also focused on data and research to inform and guide their understanding of diversity issues. A majority of participants, however, emphasized their interactions with people from diverse backgrounds as a key means of developing greater awareness and understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion issues as well as building relationships with a diverse network of people to support future actions and initiatives.

A second key category of practices to develop greater understanding of diversity involves a leader's *personal commitment to active engagement* with diversity issues. Nine participants indicated that a conscious *commitment to a lifelong journey of personal learning* about identity, race and diversity was part of their strategy to develop greater understanding of self and others. Six participants reported that a conscious commitment to lifelong learning was of critical importance for them. Seven participants indicated that they actively reflected on and learned from their *missteps and mistakes* with diversity issues and situations, including influence of earlier instances when they may not have taken appropriate action to address a diversity issue. Five participants reported that active reflection on mistakes and missed opportunities was a key means of developing greater awareness of self and diversity issues. In addition, six participants reported that they consciously worked to *practice multiplicity* to build their understanding of self and

others, developing greater awareness of their own identity perspectives and considering the perspectives of other identities that are different from their own. Five participants indicated that practicing multiplicity was an important part of increasing their understanding of self and others from diverse backgrounds.

> I was invited to be a speaker. . . . I decided to [talk about] a topic of openness, understanding and embracing difference, whatever the language would have been back then. It was like 'being gay is ok', however we would have said it back then. At one point, I made some comment . . . it was something like . . . 'Well, we may not agree with', or 'We may find homosexuality upsetting' [and] afterwards [a friend] came up to me and said, 'Thank you for doing that, but I have to say I was really rattled when you said that'. And it was like geez, here you are trying to do the right thing and your own stupidity and your own flawed thinking, things that were hardwired into your spinal column at birth, are hard to get away from. So it was that moment of realizing [that] it's easy when you get caught up in this to get caught up in your own identity as super-hero, like the one who gets it and other people don't get it, and that was a moment of, honestly, humiliation for me. Also, self-awareness and realization that I still had and have a lot of work to do . . . I think part of it is that it has made me empathetic, not just to those who are at the receiving end of racism and bigotry, but also maybe a little empathetic of those who are perpetrators by understanding just how deep that runs . . . especially those of us who were intentional advocates, who would maybe be a little judgmental about it . . . it allowed me to realize that it's hard for me to sit and castigate somebody when I have this really painful example of my own

> inability to see beyond those ideas I was given or I had developed without thinking about them.

For many participants, the process of developing greater awareness and understanding has been an ongoing process for decades through personal efforts to read, learn and reflect along the way.

The third key category of ways to increase understanding of diversity issues involves external sources of influence. Six participants reported that their *college experience* was an influential force to develop a greater understanding of diversity, race and identity, with four participants indicating their college experience was critically important to building their understanding of self and others.

> It was not something that we had talked about in high school because almost everybody in my high school was white. But once I got to college and law school, it was a topic that we talked about in some classes, particularly in law school . . . that really made me aware that there were a lot of things I had taken for granted. When people think that it's all about merit, that [they] don't realize that you were born not at home plate but at least first base, and some people at second or third base. You did have a lot of advantages that you didn't even recognize. I think that it helped to meet people who had had come from very modest and under-privileged economic backgrounds, for example, who had been in schools that did not even have . . . anywhere near what my schools had to offer growing up. That made me aware of privileges I had that frankly I had never thought about before. I think I've tried to be much more aware of those types of issues and differences. I hope that it's made me more empathetic as a leader, to

> recognize that just because I might feel a particular way about an issue or might react in a certain way, or might have had a certain life experience, that that is not going to be the experience or perspective of everyone else that I encounter.

For some study participants, college was their first extended and direct exposure to a diverse community of people that resulted in increased awareness and understanding of diversity issues. Classroom discussions and general exposure to a diverse mix of people provided opportunities for both intellectual and personal growth that impacted participants' thinking about identity and inclusion and built on the influences of their earlier experiences and interactions.

In terms of other types of external influences, seven participants reported that they initiated, sponsored, attended and/or participated in *campus and community diversity events* as a regular practice to develop a growing understanding of diversity issues. Five participants indicated that this practice was a key strategy to become more aware of diversity issues. Six participants also reported that the *era in which they grew up* was a conscious influence on developing their understanding of diversity and social justice issues. Nearly all of the participants mentioned that the political and social movements during the 1960s and 70s were part of the backdrop and environment of their teenage or college years. Roughly, a third of participants pointedly identified that era as a direct source of conscious influence on their increased awareness and understanding of diversity and social justice, and four participants indicated significant impact from observing or in some cases directly participating in political and social movements earlier in their life. In addition, seven participants reported that their understanding of diversity issues was aided by *diversity programs and diversity training activities* in their institution

and/or community, with one participant reporting that active engagement in diversity programs provided a key means of developing greater personal awareness and understanding of diversity issues and diverse life experiences of others.

Summary of Strategies to Develop Understanding and Awareness

One of the most important ways that study participants have developed a greater understanding of identity and diversity issues was through *active dialogue with others,* especially with people who are different from them. These conversations were most effective, according to study participants, when they were not casual in nature, but rather focused on important issues. They also emphasized listening over talking as a way to gather input in order to better understand the life experience of people from different backgrounds. In addition, study participants emphasized the need to be open and vulnerable when sharing their own experiences, fears and questions with others as a way to build trust and forge relationships as well as encourage meaningful interactions that increase understanding and awareness for everyone involved.

Study participants also reported that they developed greater understanding of diversity through various forms of *reflection*. They deliberately invested time and energy to think about how their personal life experiences are different from others, with a specific focus on identity issues. The combination of thoughtful dialogue with others and personal reflection on meaning found in experiences with others produced a third key method of developing greater understanding of diversity issues – developing *personal relationships with people from diverse backgrounds.*

Overall, the primary way that study participants developed their understanding of diversity and identity issues involved meaningful dialogue with white and non-white

people, along with active reflection about what is learned through that dialogue. They also used these activities to develop relationships with a diverse mix of people to increase awareness and understanding as well as build trust and develop relationships to establish a foundation for partnerships. Extended engagement in these types of activities leads to the third and most critical stage of IWML development: active engagement in efforts to promote diversity, equity and social justice.

Awareness and Understanding Theory

Study participants described a combination of internal and external strategies to develop their awareness of identity, race and privilege issues and increase understanding of the ways that race, gender and privilege benefit some while disadvantaging others. They reported turning inward through reflection and outward though connections with others to make sense of a changing perspective on the world. What happens at this critical stage in the personal development of inclusive white male leaders is the focus of a range of research that examined how white males ultimately begin to take action as an inclusive white male leader.

Privilege Theory

A key aspect of coming to terms with the impact of race and gender involves the concept of privilege, a theory originating with McIntosh's (1988a) studies of white male dominance and advantaged position in American culture. Other related research (Ancis & Syzmanski, 2001; Helms, 1995) emphasized the importance of acknowledging and confronting white privilege by linking privilege awareness with increased anti-racism activities for white people. In addition, Pinterits et al. (2009) identified four key factors to assess attitudes toward white privilege: *awareness and understanding* of white

privilege; *remorse, anger or shame* about the existence of white privilege; *anticipated costs of addressing* white privilege, including fear and anxiety about addressing or losing white privilege; and *willingness to confront* white privilege. These theories presented aspects of white privilege that are relevant to this study: To what extent are study participants influenced by the concept of white privilege? Does their growing recognition of diversity issues include remorse or concern about the impact of privilege on others, or the degree to which they may have personally benefited from privilege in their life and career?

It is important to note that about half of the study participants mentioned but did not emphasize white privilege as a factor in their involvement in diversity, equity and inclusion work. Only seven participants made a point to highlight white privilege as a key issue that influenced their diversity efforts. In general, there was more common ground among participants in terms of greater attention to the general concept of privilege and much less emphasis on privilege due to race and gender.

> I went to a high school that was almost entirely white. We all had [white privilege], so it was probably more in college that I started to understand it, when I was around a more diverse group of people. I didn't know that term was used at the time, I don't know if I thought about it in that term but I thought about the fact that I had certain advantages. Again, for me, the advantages were not simply the white privilege advantage, it was really the whole package that I saw that I had, just an advantage unrelated to my own competency. I know I've benefited from that throughout the rest of my career. . . . I think I've always been conscious of that . . . being aware of when you're evaluating people [and] whether that

> influences people to go in a certain direction with a certain candidate, or to over evaluate the competency of a certain employee. Knowing that does happen a lot makes me sensitive to that when I'm looking at a hiring decision or a promotion decision or any of those things.

Some participants described the influence of direct observation of racism, discrimination and white privilege early in their life, but they did not report fully understanding the underlying issues until later on:

> At a very young age, we were in the South and I'd see lines where you'd have African American communities and white communities, and the segregation. It was real clear. [And all that] I witnessed in Los Angeles in the '60s . . . when you see the pictures on TV of police dogs and fire hoses, it affected me in how unfair and how ugly that was. . . . when I really started to look at identity as a white person in the context of white privilege, I was probably in mid-career. I really internalized what white privilege meant, which is not about me per se, it's about a race. Just because of one's color, and being a member of that race, [we] are inherently born with privilege that other people don't have. . . . [and] there have been some women of color who have been leaders nationally and said it's hard being a woman in terms of access and equity.

In contrast, it is important to note that two study participants did not consider white privilege as a significant or even valid issue in their leadership work. Their stance suggests that it is possible for a white male leader to play an active role for diversity, equity and social justice without openly acknowledging white privilege as a significant factor to address:

> I have never even used that language. Until recently, I hadn't even seen it. I guess that's part of the current language that's being used. If you ask me when did I become aware of an unequal distribution of power, prestige and reward in this society, I'd say when I was a kid. Then if you ask me, when did I become aware of the maldistribution of the power, prestige and reward by race and gender, I'd say it again, 'When I was a kid'. Now if you want to translate that as when did I understand about white privilege, I don't think I saw it as a white thing.

Another participant considered the issue of privilege in regard to the specific socio-economic context of his own rural upbringing:

> When you grow up in a rural agrarian town, that term really doesn't resonate. There was no privilege for anybody. Now, I understand what white privilege is and I understand there are many parts of the country, but when you are in an agrarian rural community and say that somebody is privileged, it's quite frankly offensive. In the culture that I work in now, I would certainly believe and hope that people didn't think that existed. I would hope that nobody feels privileged. . . . it just doesn't come up much in the discussion here.

Overall, the study data reflect a general acceptance of various aspects of privilege as a key element of the evolving awareness and understanding related to work as an inclusive white male leader. The specific issue of white privilege, however – concern for unearned privilege based on a white racial identity - is not a focus point for a majority of study participants, and certainly not to the extent one might expect considering the extensive research on white privilege.

Racial Identity Theory

The study data provide evidence to support aspects of Helms (1984) theory of a five-stage white racial consciousness model. In varying ways, the study participants presented stages of awareness of racial identity that reflect Helms' general process of evolution from initial contact and recognition of racial identity, racism and privilege to various levels of acceptance of a white identity and what that identity means in comparison to others. While all study participants may not have yet fully reached the stage of autonomy defined by Helms in part as being "secure in his or her own racial identity" (p. 156), the early stages of contact and recognition are consistently present among study participants in terms of developing an initial understanding and awareness of identity and race issues. There is also data to consider in light of Chavez and Guido-DiBrito's (1999) revision of Helms' theory of white racial identity development that distinguishes between *racial perceptions of others versus racial perception of self*, with study participants reporting varying degrees of a conscious awareness of their own racial identity as a white male:

> There was nothing diverse about my past, and no real exposure to diversity. . . . I think I was aware of [race and gender] in high school. I was intellectually aware of it . . . because I was in high school [during the] great time of the civil rights movement. I was very aware of the issues, I just hadn't experienced them on a more visceral level, either personally or witnessed it with those I knew. There was an intellectual awareness. . . . I just didn't think of myself as anything. The irony is . . . my identity as a white male, I sort of feel has been progressively pushed upon me through my career . . . as the diversity and inclusion movement

> has grown, I guess I've felt more and more pigeonholed to that label. I never thought of it, those were boxes I checked. There was no identity as such, it's not even an identity that I want. I now feel that people put me there.

For some participants, study abroad experiences in another country provided the first awareness of having an identity that is different from others:

> To the extent that there was a particular moment, it was probably the experience as an exchange student in Japan, because it was such a big change for me being away from the family, being out of my comfort zone, where I had to learn, or at least try to learn, a new language, to learn different customs, to understand people who had grown up in very different ways. That made me very conscious of the fact that the world did not just look like me or have a background like me. And that expanded further, of course, when I went to college . . . for me, that was a really formative moment in my life and made me start to think about that, and ponder what that meant for how I was going to live the rest of my life.

Most of the study participants first recognized their identity in terms of race and gender through comparison with others who were different, or in situations when they found themselves viewed as different from others. The initial experience of awareness of white racial identity was often followed by some degree of reflection on the meaning of the experience and the apparent significance of their race and gender identity. There is some degree of correlation among study participants between the degree of recognition of their own racial and gender identity and the degree to which they actively consider how white privilege has impacted their own life as well as affected others who are different. Most of the study participants, however, focused more on what they needed to do to be 'fair-

minded' as a leader than on considering the significance and impact of their personal identity as a white male on their life, career and leadership behavior.

Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) also focused on the *significance of ethnic identity development among white people*, described as "an individual's movement toward a highly conscious identification with their own cultural values, behaviors, beliefs, and traditions" (p. 41). A number of participants mentioned paying attention to the many facets of ethnic diversity among others, or people in general, but few participants indicated conscious recognition of their own ethnicity as an aspect of their white identity - and some leaders questioned the value of paying any attention to ethnicity:

> I look forward to the day when there's no boxes on any application that ask what your race or ethnicity is. Just like today, we don't have a box if you're from Europe, which part of Europe? You're from the world. Now these are just the categories people are using today. I literally remember when it used to be such a big deal to be Irish, or not Irish, or whatever. That doesn't mean that I don't think every ethnicity should celebrate, just like Irish people celebrate their Irishness, but I would look forward to the day when race or ethnicity or sexual identity or gender identity are nothing more than whether you are blonde or brunette.

Other participants shared a goal of getting beyond paying attention to ethnicity:

> My question and life goal is that we somehow evolve as people beyond this issue of race and ethnicity and that we really have an understanding of what it is to be a human being. There's a pathway for all of us regardless of one's religious convictions or beliefs, and united we can be so much better than we are.

One participant framed the issue in terms of achieving equity:

> I don't tend to divide the world into well, here's my ethnic group, and here's my non-ethnic group. What do you need and how can we meet all of that? It's more of an equity thing for me.

There was some consideration by a few study participants who are Jewish about how that aspect of their identity related to their work with diversity issues:

> I remember seeing these images on television about people at the lunch counters being attacked. . . . it seems to me that very early, it was evident to me that people of color, and in my case it was mostly African American people, were not treated the same as whites. I knew that people who were of a different faith - in my case, Jews - were also not treated the same. It seemed like we had something in common, like there was a commonality of injustice that was a part of our mutual existence. It just always was part of my consciousness. . . . I think I finally became aware that I'm white. Even though I may be part of a religious minority, that's not evident to people when I'm walking down the street. You could always see who appeared to be African American, who appeared to be white, and it was clear to me that I was someone people identified as white. . . . maybe it was just my own awareness that made me self-aware. I knew when folks encounter African American people they might treat them differently than they treated me . . . I have to confess, it's not clear to me exactly when that awareness sort of took hold.

While there was considerable recognition of ethnicity by participants in regard to awareness of the ethnicity of other people, there is little evidence of a focus on specific

aspects of their own ethnic identity as a white person. While this behavior does not reflect the principles of Chavez and Guido-DiBrito's theory of ethnicity, it could be interpreted to consider that greater recognition of personal ethnicity by the study participants might help them develop even greater understanding of race and identity issues as well as improved relationships with people of different identities.

In terms of *whiteness* theory, McKinney (2005) theorized that *awareness of whiteness* does not occur naturally for white people; it is usually a "prompted identity" (p. 20) that is only recognized when the issue of whiteness comes up in life experiences or when recalling life experiences makes an individual conscious of their racial identity. McKinney described moments of insight into racial identity as *turning point* experiences, while a more significant conscious shift in racial identity awareness is an *epiphany* experience, often coming about from a series of turning point events. Most often, according to McKinney, these critical experiences come about through interactions with others, usually with people of color, that provide a new experience for white people that inspires an initial conscious awareness of being white.

Study participants provided considerable support for prompted identity and turning point experiences:

> I remember having an African American professor and I went to a conference, and we stayed at his home and we went to his church so I was the only white person in his whole church. That's a very impactful feeling. . . . the experience of being the only white person in a wholly black church. I'm one of those people, I'm uncomfortable in a strange setting anyways, I'm more introverted, and here I am in this church. And it was one of those churches that asks guests to stand up

> and introduce themselves. I was clearly a guest and I really didn't want to do that, but I did. It made me think about what it must be like to be the only black person in a white neighborhood. This was when bussing and desegregation was going on, and I could see why I wouldn't want to be bussed out of my friend group or my neighborhood into what felt very foreign to me. . . . I recognize the importance of being around people who are like you, and I don't know if I would have known that [at] the level I know it now if I hadn't had that experience of that church. So I'm always looking to balance that, I don't think it's one or the other, I think we have to realize that . . . people tend to congregate around people who are like them. So you have to work within that confine, and try to broaden opportunities and perspectives, because if you don't, the ideal is not to have a segregated society, but you know it's not realistic to think human beings aren't going to sort people out into different categories. We've been doing that for thousands of years and we're still going to do that. It's what are we going to do when we put them into categories in our minds, and to what extent do we allow that sorting to reflect itself in policy and reflect itself in behavior that we have toward individuals. I think those are the things that we have to address. . . . I'm still talking about [that black church experience] forty-some years later.

This story is just one example of many accounts described by study participants, most often involving childhood experiences, study broad, high school and college years, and early work experiences. In most cases, the participants described a significant life experience, usually in their pre-college years and often in the form of a social situation with others who are different from them, that created an initial 'prompted identity' of

whiteness and planted a seed of racial identity awareness that developed greater meaning through the course of their life and career.

Several theories linked active engagement by white people with racial justice work to their development of *racial awareness and knowledge of racism and privilege*. Reason et al (2005) and Reason and Evans (2007) identified a positive correlation between awareness of whiteness and racial justice activism. They asserted that racial awareness helps move white students toward a racially aware worldview, increases the likelihood of racial justice involvement, and decreases the degree of apathy and indifference to racial inequality and injustice among white students. They also asserted that a conscious sense of racial identity is an essential pre-requisite for white people engaging in racial justice efforts (Reason & Evans, 2007). Trepagnier (2006) identified a similar correlation of race awareness, increased information about racial issues, and conversations about race between white and black people with a higher degree of anti-racism activism among white people. Trepagnier asserted that a personal knowledge of racial issues is essential to moving white people past the point of good intentions to where they actually have an informed understanding of their own racial identity and how it correlates to the challenges and experiences of others with different identities.

The study data support these theories in the sense that a majority (about two-thirds) of study participants reported that engagement in deliberate learning activities helped them develop awareness of race and diversity issues as part of their conscious effort to identify and understand racial identity issues. In addition, most of the primary learning activities reported by study participants involved a focus on racial identity issues, such as spending time with others who are different; experiencing discomfort as a

minority person; and reflecting on the impact of privilege, identity, race and gender. In general, the study data indicate that focused learning activities and interactions with people of color are key factors in helping white people develop a genuine understanding and awareness of race and equity issues that lays the groundwork for subsequent actions to promote diversity, equity and social justice.

Reflection

Much of the research on awareness-building activities also highlighted the importance of personal reflection by white people to develop greater understanding of internal issues of identity and self as well as external issues of race and privilege. Boyd and Fales (1983) emphasized the significance of non-linear and dynamic reflection on life experiences to produce meaning from experiential learning that can change one's conceptual perspective. They described an initial sense of discomfort that occurs from a life experience – "it is not a willed or intended state; it occurs" (p. 106) - and then identification of a concern develops in relation to the self, followed by "openness to new information" that presents the issue from new perspectives (p. 109). This process reaches resolution through "integration, coming together, acceptance of self-reality, and creative synthesis" (p. 109), bringing about a conscious awareness of a change in identity. Ultimately, a conscious decision determines "operational feasibility" and action applies the new understanding to leadership practice (p. 112).

A number of study participants reported a similar process of *reflection on experiential learning*:

> I was a military brat. My father was a career officer and if you know much about the military, you know the military was actually one of the first organizations to

> really begin to become diverse as a major organization. It was post-World War II [when] that really started to come about. It was a dramatic change in the military, going from segregated units to integrated units. . . . I went to a post school in which I had [friends] who were children of non-commissioned officers who were African-American. I remember very distinctly that I was allowed to go to their house during the daytime and I could play with them at daytime but I couldn't stay over at night. I never could quite understand that, what was different that I couldn't spend the night there as I could with a white child? Looking back on it now, I understand a little bit more perhaps that my father was drawing the military distinction between commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers, but I also believe there was some lingering racism . . . that was sort of my first interaction about how somehow these children were different from me because I wasn't allowed to stay over at their house at night.

Another participant described a learning experience involving his older brother:

> I was a sophomore in high school, and my brother was a sophomore at the university. We were sitting in this restaurant and these young men, African Americans, stopped in to come into this restaurant. This would have been about 1962. My brother goes, 'Uh oh, this is not good.' I am thinking, what do you mean, this is not good? He said, 'Watch'. These young men walked in and they were met at the counter by a waitress and she said, 'I'd be happy to take your order to go', okay? So my brother, he knows one of the guys and he's really embarrassed about this. They live in the same dorm. . . . these guys got their food and got back in their car. My brother said, 'I can tell you what's going to happen

> next. . . . just watch'. Sure enough, these guys *slowly* backed up and left. They made a statement, and that statement was, 'We don't like your policy, it's wrong, actually it's against the law, but we're going to be polite. . . . we're going to show you that we are bigger than you are'. . . . it was really very interesting for me to observe what was going on, and also to see the embarrassment for my brother . . . it was one of those really defining moments: Why is that? What's going on here? Why would we treat someone like that? . . . It was pretty egregious. Even today, I don't think this little town would do that, but it would still be an item if you went into a restaurant there. You'd be an item. Everybody would kind of stop and look, 'What's going on here?' It would not be a totally comfortable feeling.

Participants also described more recent life experiences that had great impact:

> I was called for jury duty, maybe two years ago now, in a criminal court. I was not put on a jury panel but I spent an entire day in a pool of potential jurors. . . . every single defendant was a young indigenous male. . . . every one. You've just got to sit there for a day and look at that and say, something is wrong. This is just wrong. I mean, in this country, indigenous people . . . are way over-represented in the prison system. They are over-represented on welfare rolls, they are over-represented in terms of healthcare costs. They are under-represented in employment rosters and so on. It's so clear. And the education counts for indigenous people are not as good as they are for non-indigenous people. The correlation between education and all these good things, and the negative correlation between education and all those bad things, is just overwhelming.

> You get close to it, and if you're a person like me in the system, you just have to look at this and say, we have got to do better.

These are just a few examples of reflections on life experiences that helped study participants make sense of life events and find meaning behind the experiences. It is possible that other white males might not have noticed these types of events, or might not have been encouraged to ponder the reasons behind the experiences. The study participants, however, regularly described how these types of life experiences prompted them to pause and reflect and think deeply – at the time of the event, and often later and repeatedly over the years – to try to determine what happened and why, and most important, what could be done to address the critical issues present in the experience.

Barlas' et al (2012) theory of *critical humility* presents a specific aspect of developing understanding and awareness of diversity that is particularly relevant to the findings of this study. Barlas et al emphasized that concerned white people must find a way to accept that they need to take action despite the fact that their "knowledge is partial and evolving" (p. 2). They must be "committed to speaking up and taking action in the world" despite the fact that their current knowledge is "however imperfect" (p. 2). In short, white male leaders must commit to taking action to address inequity and injustice even while they know they are still learning about identity, race and privilege issues – and despite the fact that they may well understand that they are personal beneficiaries of aspects of the privilege and racism that they seek to address (Barlas et al, p. 47-48).

Study participants reported that they experienced the type of personal challenge described by Barlas et al (2012) in variety of ways, including consciously *using their privileged status* to act as effective leaders for diversity, equity and social justice:

> I would say that I am unapologetically determined to work through [issues of privilege] as frequently as needed. . . . I'm more comfortable having these topics come up and dealing with them in the open. Because again, what happens to a lot of my peers is they get afraid that they are going to say something racist so they are always trying to avoid the topic. I've had enough experiences to know that I probably will say something racist but if I let that stop me, then I'm not going to use the privilege and everything that I have to influence the situation the way I can.

One study participant described the idea of using privilege in a proactive way: "I think it's using power for good rather than for evil. It is an opportunity I have, so I want to do good things with that." While a white male leader cannot change the fact that his life and career path is placed within a system designed and run by white males, a number of study participants expressed a conscious desire to use the power, influence and access awarded by their personal status to help reveal and address imbalances and injustices present in the system.

Latino (2010) also emphasized a process of reflection to connect the personal and professional aspects of being an inclusive leader. Latino asserted that a white leader must first seek to understand their self and identity, and then work to recognize how their identities impact their leadership roles in order to achieve the personal transformation necessary to move toward genuine inclusiveness. Critical self-reflection on race is essential for white leaders to find meaning in their life experiences, according to Latino, and critical awareness of racial discrimination is essential to understanding and addressing racial injustice. This process creates questions for white leaders about their

existing "worldview", with the resulting personal dilemmas bringing about changing views through processes of *objective reframing* that reflects on and challenges views of others and *subjective reframing* that critiques one's own racial assumptions to bring about "a more inclusive personal identity" (p. 37).

Study participants provided a number of accounts that supported Latino's concept of *objective reframing.* For example:

> Fundamental [to a leader's role] is to provide the support for people to learn, to understand and indeed to celebrate what they've learned . . . moving and evolving people's thinking to what is much more just and what is much more supportive of their fellow people in their communities. The driver is to continue to have people learn to grow and take on the responsibilities themselves of some of these fundamental principles and values that make the environments in which we live a better place to live and work. And also to make sure that people know the benefit of this over the long term.

Participants often focused this issue in terms of helping others understand the meaning and significance of equity:

> One [important aspect of my role] is helping people understand that we often confuse equal treatment with equitable treatment. I think helping people understand how equity is different is really an important part of advancing this whole area of inclusion. People will often say with great vigor, 'We are just treating everybody equally'. Helping them understand why that may not be equitable, people don't always start at the same place. Some people start at the starting line and some people start one hundred yards behind the starting line.

> Treating them equal, giving them the same amount of time to run the race isn't necessarily fair. The issues of justice, fairness, being part of a civil society where people can live out their lives without being discriminated against, those are all things that have been important to me.

Obviously, a leader cannot achieve these goals on his own. Although a president has considerable authority and influence, it helps when people hear the information and messages from someone other than the president. Some study participants reported bringing in outside experts to help the faculty and campus community understand the issues, challenges and opportunities for new thinking about diversity issues.

Study participants also reported the practice of *subjective reframing*, described by Latino (2012) as the practice of white leaders using reflection to question their own assumptions to develop a more inclusive viewpoint:

> Even early in my career when I set out to provide what I thought was a different kind of service, one that was more respectful, free of bias, I don't think I understood as I do now issues of white privilege, for example, how as a white male there are just things I don't ever even think about or have to think about that others do . . . in that sense, it's been a very clear part of my effort to think about what we do and how we do it, and who does it. What are the messages we're sending, trying to be thoughtful about my own views. Frankly, even getting older now, recognizing that my views are perhaps not consistent with folks of different generations, much less people with different racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Many participants described conscious efforts to put themselves in situations and relationships where others question and challenge their views and assumptions:

> We have [a] woman who leads a lot of our campus diversity efforts . . . we've had some real good discussion about her perceptions of how things are going here. As good as I talk about [how things are], she also talks about things we can do better. So I always am looking for those opportunities to learn. I think that was part of my desire to get involved in the NAACP, to understand the African American community in this area, which is probably different than I've experienced in some other areas. I'm always looking for that. And in my classes, I've always had an element . . . about issues of race and gender. Not just me talking about it, but getting the students engaged in that conversation.

Objective and subjective reframing involve a collaborative process of "mutual understanding" (Bruner, 1991, 1995; Erikson, 2007) and cognitive evolution that lies at the heart of the process to become an inclusive leader. The accounts of participants in this study consistently reflect an ongoing interactive process of teaching others and learning from others as a key part of both their personal development process and their leadership activity.

Interactions with Students

Kezar (2007) identified a similar kind of "mutual learning process" based on dialogue between college presidents and students as an important part of the diversity change process (p. 480), emphasizing the value of interactions with students from diverse populations to listen and understand their campus and life experiences. This activity is critical to developing successful leadership efforts for diversity and inclusion, according to Kezar; however, only half of the study participants mentioned interactions with

students as a key means of developing their awareness and understanding of diversity issues:

> I continue to make a conscious effort to do things big and little, in informal conversations with groups of African American students, Latino American students. I try to go to their events. I also make an effort on a very small but personal level. When I'm walking across campus, if there's a student of color - I try to do it with all students - but I make a conscious effort if there's a student of color walking in the opposite direction or in my vicinity to make direct eye contact with them and say, 'Good morning, how are you' or 'Good afternoon'. . . . and you know how unfortunately dining halls will segregate? . . . I always make a conscious effort to go over to the table where there are significant numbers of African American students, trying to let them know that I know they are here and that I care about them. Just on a very simple level.

Some participants described a willingness to be challenged by students:

> I had [a meeting with a] group of students who were very respectful, but as the conversation developed, there were some pointed questions, but always respectful. The woman who arranged it, an African American woman, kind of apologized to me afterwards. . . . she said, 'Well, I know it got a little, it wasn't personal, but the tone of the question was just a little direct'. And I said, 'That's a success! If they can ask me direct questions as a white guy who's president to the university, if they can feel sufficiently comfortable respectfully but directly asking me questions, that's a home run!' What was interesting, after we concluded the conversation . . . everyone in the room, including those who had

> started to ask the pointed questions, all wanted to have a picture taken, and that's a success. It's not a success if we all sit around and imagine that everything is perfect, right? And it's not a success if we end up in a shouting match . . . those are failures. Success is having courage and creating an environment where they have the courage to ask me direct pointed questions, yet are respectful and genuinely appreciative that I'm taking some time to have that conversation . . . if I can create that environment on a regular basis, we've got a shot at making progress on our campus.

While only half of the study participants emphasized this type of student engagement, it seems reasonable to consider that interaction with students of color can help white male leaders learn about diversity issues, better understand different life experiences of others, and build relationships for future collaboration. Many leaders may feel they do not have time to engage in this type of outreach activity on a regular basis, but the research and the accounts of study participants indicate that great learning opportunities are available for a leader who will make time to talk with students from diverse population groups.

Summary of Relevant Awareness Theories

The study data indicate the importance of recognizing and exploring racial identity as a key vehicle to developing understanding of race and diversity issues by white male leaders in higher education (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999; Helms, 1984; McKinney, 2005; Reason et al 2005; Reason & Evans 2007; Trepagnier, 2006). Both existing research and the study data demonstrate that this process occurs primarily through various forms of engagement with people of color that provide opportunities for experiential learning. The study data especially emphasize childhood experiences, study

abroad, and high school, college and early career stages as critical periods for developing awareness of the many differences in racial identity. At least half of the study participants also indicated that engagement with people of color often initiated a prompted identity of whiteness and a related growing awareness and understanding of the advantages bestowed by privileges from their race and gender. The study participants consistently focused more, however, on developing an awareness and understanding of the general concept of privilege, with a less conscious focus on white male privilege.

Study participants emphasized the importance of reflection on life experiences and engagement with diverse groups of people, including self-reflection related to race and racial discrimination in the form of objective reframing that focuses on exploring views of others and subjective reframing that focuses more on questioning one's personal attitudes and beliefs (Latino, 2012). In addition, about half of the study participants also reported a secondary area of engagement and reflection involving deliberate efforts to reach out to students of color for critical conversations and learning experiences (Kezar, 2007).

Most important, the study data indicate that the participants reflected more on developing their awareness and understanding of the racial identities and challenges of others and focused less on working to develop a greater understanding of their own identities. In addition, only half of the study participants indicated a conscious effort to examine the impact of privilege in their own experience. Most often, their efforts focused primarily on the impact of privilege on non-privileged others rather than reflecting on how privilege has affected their own life, career, identity and self.

Chapter VII

Analysis of Findings: Action

The third stage of the developmental process to become an inclusive white male leader (IWML) focuses on efforts by study participants to convert their evolving understanding of identity and self into action to promote diversity, equity and social justice. This final stage is critical to becoming an IWML as it transforms the personal growth that occurs in the middle stage of development into external outcomes that impact others and change a leader's institution and community. The action stage further sets an IWML apart from other white male leaders in that he begins to develop a track record of decisions, actions and change efforts that influence how his institution connects with and serves a diverse range of population groups. This final stage is when an IWML uses his position, status and evolving awareness and understanding of diversity issues to change the environment, policies, practices and culture of his institution - and in the most successful instances, begin to transform his community as well.

Study participants identified 239 tactics that involve some form of action to promote and support diversity, ranging from small scale, short-term and immediate actions to broader strategic and long-term initiatives. While many of these tactics are rather similar in nature, based on a common theme or idea with specific differences in details, the range of tactics reported by study participants fit into five general categories. First, the study participants focused on their own *personal behavior* as a leader, making deliberate efforts to demonstrate a genuine commitment to diversity and social justice that established a foundation of trust and a reputation for credibility, especially among under-represented population groups. Second, the participants emphasized the importance of *connecting and working with other people* as a primary means of

developing actions and initiatives aimed at achieving outcomes that positively impact diversity, equity and social justice. Third, the participants *used their executive position* to connect with others and leverage attention and resources to initiate or support activities aimed at diversity, equity and social justice objectives. Fourth, they reported a *conscious use of data* to inform and guide their work, often using data as a resource to encourage others to accept their ideas and initiatives or to demonstrate the value of a principle, tactic or project. In addition, the study participants worked to *implement change within the existing policies, processes and culture* of their institution or system, using the organizational structure, processes and positions available to them. Even when they deliberately worked to act as a change agent, the study participants often looked for ways to integrate new positions, programs and objectives into the existing institutional structure to introduce incremental or staged change efforts.

Personal Aspects

The study participants consistently focused on their *personal behavior* as a way to build a foundation of trust and credibility within their campus and community. Their success was largely dependent on consistently demonstrating a genuine personal commitment to diversity, equity and social justice. Participants also stressed that it takes time to establish a *consistent pattern of actions* to develop credibility:

> People are going to judge you by your actions, not by your words, ultimately . . . when I was at [my former institution] I had people come up to me who had listened to me [on] multiple occasions to see if I would be consistent in what I said to different audiences, or if I would just say one thing to one group and another to another group. . . . people will give you the credibility because of your

> consistency of your position and that your deeds are speaking for you - what you are actually doing, not what you are saying.

One participant emphasized a need to first establish a general level of trust as a foundation for specific efforts related to diversity and inclusion:

> I think what helps anybody get this on the table is . . . some kind of a generalized credibility and trust on and off the campus. I think that's the most important thing. If a president has that, and makes a moral and/or ethical issue out of inclusion . . . [he] has a real shot at getting that to be front and center, or [it] will at least be something to be thoughtful about. I think presidents without that kind of generalized moral authority on campus will fail, not only at this matter but at just about everything else.

The study participants emphasized two key ways to create trust and credibility: a leader must prove to have high character and integrity to begin with, and he must consistently demonstrate his commitment to diversity, equity and social justice through actions rather than rhetoric or superficial efforts. It's 'how you walk the talk' that counts and participants acknowledged that presidents are closely watched to determine if they truly care and believe in diversity, equity and social justice.

Study participants also emphasized the critical importance of demonstrating a *sincere personal interest and commitment* to diversity issues. The participants focused on developing an ongoing pattern of behavior and action that consistently made diversity a clear priority, whether it was through formal actions or personal efforts, such as learning a second language in the community or donating personal funds to support a program:

> In the first line of [our] vision statement is that we will serve all people. I would make a big deal about the word 'all'. We'd get in these debates about what does 'all' mean? And there are people who can't be served by us and so forth and so on. We'd have these debates about, 'Well ok, we're going to start a program for people with disabilities, for instance, a program for people who are older, and that's how we're going to respond to diversity.' And my answer would be, 'That's great, except we must also look at the ethnic diversity of our community. You can't ignore that' . . . I literally would force the issue and say, 'When I say ten percent diverse, I mean ten percent who are ethnically diverse'. It has to specifically say that, otherwise I would see people not really address ethnic diversity, they would address any other kind of diversity other than ethnic diversity. It was kind of an interesting phenomenon. From the very beginning, I had to be clear about my desire to respond to ethnic diversity and the achievement gaps that we continue to see.

In addition to being assertive about their expectations, study participants stressed the need to be deliberately proactive rather than simply responding to needs and opportunities as they arise. They also noted that an inclusive leader must support all groups – a leader cannot selectively champion the needs of some groups while neglecting others, such as advocating for ethnic diversity while remaining silent on LGBT issues.

Study participants also identified *persistence* as a critical factor in their efforts to achieve credibility:

> We started fairly early with 'here's the thing I want to do', but it took a long time to have a lot of success. That's one of the things with diversity efforts, sometimes

> it felt like three or four years of mitigated failure before we had success . . . everything we were trying to do for one reason or another didn't seem to work. It was a lot of business issues, it was different, they'd done things the same way for many years and that's the way it should be done. So trying to change the way we did things was really a lot of it. By the time we started having success, the buy-in was pretty strong across the college, it just took a while to get them to that point. A lot of discussions about are we being unfair in our search process if we're aggressively looking for African American minority candidates. All those types of things. It took us several years of not having a lot of success before we started to have some success.

Another participant stressed the need to provide a steady voice in support of diversity issues:

> [I talk] about why it matters and why it's important. . . . raising awareness of these issues and the fact that there is still a lot of work to be done, to make sure that we don't fall into complacency, or get weary because of limited resources or because of push back, or because of other priorities. I think that part of [my role] is to constantly remind people that the work is not done, this is ongoing and we have to stick with it. . . . help people recognize that change is not in this one area, it's not something you just do once. This has to be a commitment that the university makes on an ongoing basis.

While acknowledging that success can encourage persistence, study participants stressed that an inclusive leader cannot rest on his laurels and accomplishments or accept any conditions, policies or practices that do not support diversity or do not promote social

justice. Persistence may not make a president the most popular person on campus or in the community, but study participants indicated that it is an essential attribute of an inclusive leader.

Study participants also emphasized the need to demonstrate a commitment to diversity by *serving as a role model* for other white male leaders:

> The current political climate is making it harder and harder to have civil discourse on challenging issues related to race and gender, and issues of privilege and that sort of thing. I think it makes it that much more important for [all of us] in higher education to be the role models on how to be a safe space for these conversations . . . to demonstrate what it means to be a diverse and inclusive community, and demonstrate the values and benefits from that . . . while it's a challenge because there are a lot of bad role models out there, it's also an opportunity for us to play a very important role in society.

An inclusive leader must "set the tone" for the institution, demonstrating how to treat others. At times, IWMLs must "walk the talk" and take strong public stances on critical or controversial issues to show a personal sense of responsibility for diversity, equity and inclusion issues. In other situations, an IWML may play a gentler role for others in the institution or community, guiding people toward greater understanding and acceptance of diversity.

In some instances, participants expressed concern about the *lack of white male role models* for aspiring IWMLs:

> There are copious role models of what strong diverse leaders look like, how they talk, what their cadences are, and how they fight the fight. There really aren't a

> lot of role models [to] emulate if you are [like me], a white male leader. How can I talk about diversity? . . . I haven't really had any role models. I've had role models of people who are in the protected class group, or who are the ones who need more opportunities, but I can't for the life of me say I've learned how to do this from a white leader where I said, 'I want to be like that person'. Maybe I'm doing a disservice to somebody. I've had pieces of people, but I didn't have a role model that might have made me more effective.

It is interesting to note that while many study participants were hesitant to accept recognition for their work with diversity and social justice, they actually could serve as much-needed role models for aspiring IWMLs.

A second key area of activity identified by study participants as a way to develop trust and credibility for diversity work involves conscious attention to their responsibilities for diverse others. Participants especially stressed the importance of *proactive engagement with people of color* to build a base of credibility and support well before an incident or crisis occurs:

> When some of the issues arose on campuses last fall, I actually had a conversation with [my advisor for inclusiveness] and she said, 'You should send an email expressing solidarity with these students on the other campuses'. [I told her], 'I don't know the issues there, I don't know them well enough'. . . . we went round and around, and ultimately I came down on the side of if and when these issues arise on our campus, having sent an email expressing solidarity is not going to help me in terms of having credibility with students of color if I don't have existing relationships with them, if they don't know who I am, if they haven't

> spoken to me. . . . I think part of the upset is a perception that the folks who sit in the administrative offices don't care who they are, we take them for granted. I just believe that if those issues arise, my capacity to engage in constructive conversation will depend on whether or not I have credibility as a person before the crisis comes.

Study participants emphasized the need to build trust from the start in their relationships with people from different racial and ethnic populations through genuine engagement and dialogue. They accomplished this in part by "being transparent" in conversations, avoiding hidden motives and agendas, and demonstrating genuine care for the needs and circumstances of others.

Study participants also emphasized the importance of *serving as a mentor* for members of under-represented groups as well as with other white males:

> I focus on mentoring diverse administrators, faculty and others. I've made a conscious effort to do that, making sure who I was mentoring was not just people who were like me. I've gone out of my way to find outstanding diverse candidates and take an active role in mentoring them and helping them as they pursue their career. . . . I have an obligation as a white male to mentor those who don't look like me, and who aren't like me. If I don't do this, things will never change. [It seems] fairly obvious that we're not going to make any progress if we only mentor those who are like us. . . . sometimes going that extra effort to tell someone, a female, that you're capable of doing far more, that was probably more important than sometimes it was with some of the males that I mentored.

Just as IWMLs can serve as role models and mentors for other white males, they can also mentor people with other identities by providing them with learning opportunities to grow and develop.

One of the most critical aspects of successful diversity work reported by study participants involved a deliberate focus on *ensuring a safe and welcoming campus environment* for all – which also includes people or groups that may challenge diversity efforts:

> Make sure you strike a balance among various factions within your campus and beyond . . . we've got a group of faculty on this campus that feel that certain other faculty are bending over backwards in what we call the liberal direction, and the conservative point of view is being lost. So I am doing a balancing act, you know, to always say every view is appreciated and when we say we embrace everything, it means everything. And it might even mean there is a group on the far right that you have to make sure their voice is heard as well. Sometimes they feel, particularly in the liberal environment of the academy, that their voice is lost.

While study participants reported a sense of responsibility to ensure everyone feels they can speak up "without fear of retaliation", they focused most on efforts to create a welcoming climate for under-represented groups. As one participant commented, "This isn't going to happen naturally. We aren't going to create an inclusive environment by just being friendly, we have to work at it." Study participants also pointed out that a welcoming environment includes ensuring that all students will see people who look like them in a variety of positions on campus.

Most of the study participants also stressed the importance of *responsive leadership practices* that proactively addressed incidents on campus or in the community. Situations that require direct action provided opportunities for campus dialogue about critical issues related to diversity, equity and social justice. Study participants frequently made a point to emphasize that a white male leader should engage with activists rather than resist or challenge them whenever possible, even if those attempts are not welcomed with open arms.

> Sometimes people [want] activists to say, 'Oh, okay, you did everything and we love you'. Well, it doesn't work that way. The best you can hope for is that when you're not around, the activists will say, 'Well, we're glad we've got [him] over there because at least we know we can talk to him and he does everything he can'. But they're never going to say, 'You're one of us now, you're cool'. That's not their job, it's their job to *not* say that. And I'm expecting that.

One participant described a learning process for leaders to develop the ability to effectively respond to issues and incidents:

> You can have a reaction to an incident on campus that had racial overtones or racist graffiti or something like that and if the reaction wasn't strong enough and quick enough, you could hear people saying that because a person is white they aren't as sensitive. . . . I know I would respond much quicker and stronger today than twenty years ago, or fifteen years ago, if there was a racist incident like graffiti that had hate overtones. . . . you're not born knowing that, and it's not because someone doesn't think it's important or someone isn't taking it as seriously as they should because of a race thing, it's just because they didn't know

> the right protocols for dealing with racial incidents on campus. I think that's changed a lot in the last five years. I know today versus fifteen years ago, I have a better handle on acting immediately, swiftly, strongly, denouncing it, and that's stuff I think that presidents can learn. . . . [whether] it is a president of color or a white president, there's best practices for dealing with incidents on campus.

Study participants also emphasized that an inclusive leader must be willing to "mess up" in their efforts to respond promptly and strongly to crises and incidents on the campus. Even when a leader makes mistakes, his willingness to respond and take action will provide support and establish credibility as a leader who is committed to diversity, equity and social justice.

Study participants frequently emphasized the *need to take risks* in order to build trust and credibility for their diversity work. Taking an active, aggressive approach to leadership often demands that a president not only watches for opportunities to take action, but also tries to create opportunities that might not happen naturally. A number of participants also asserted that a leader must be willing to be an instigator who challenges practices, policies and behavior of others:

> I believe my role has been to communicate to the wider university community that in times of strife, I won't be hesitant to go and put out messages to the university community about how we collectively should be responding and acting and behaving. . . . if it's the right thing to do, then it's the right thing to do and you have to be willing to take that position. I guess you have to do a little bit of risk assessment, but you know, at the end of the day you have to live with yourself and that's kind of the way I've been. I want to make sure that I can live

> with myself. I don't want to have legal counsel or other people spend the next three days to determine if we send out a message or not. You're never going to have it perfect, you can delay and delay and delay, and that's not good.

One participant shared a personal and powerful story about the importance of taking a strong stand when necessary:

> I didn't really see myself aspiring to be president. I was fortunate, some great things happened, and maybe those things happened because I was not hesitant to speak out in a way that was careful. I had a vice president come to me, and the issue was not so much about race and ethnicity, but it had to do with another sensitive issue, it had to do with the whole concept of fairness. I was really pretty cranked about it, I felt this was wrong, and he came to talk to me later. He wanted to caution me, and he said, 'I don't think you can be that direct and that blunt'. I said, 'Well, I respect you and I'll listen to that and I'll be passionate about trying to adhere to your counsel, but I have an equal passion of my own and you know it very well'. Later he told me I was at my very best when I was a bit of a bastard, meaning there are times when you just have to let your emotions become known that you are passionate about something because it's the right thing to do. There's risk in those situations and you may lose some opportunities and you may lose an appointment or a job, or the next advancement, but you have to live with yourself. I think people respect that, and I think your time will come, you know? It will happen.

Some study participants acknowledged that a willingness to take risks could depend on where a leader is on his career path – for example, it may be easier to take risks later

rather than earlier in a career, but participants indicated they have had to be very assertive in order to make a difference. One leader stated:

> Whenever there is an opportunity, [be] much more aggressive with it . . . from the very beginning, I knew I was going to have to push a lot and not just sit back and wait for opportunities to come along. I was going to have to create them.

There are times when an IWML cannot be patient or polite, and study participants indicated that courage, commitment and a thick skin are essential aspects of a successful inclusive leader.

At the same time, study participants clearly *exercised caution* in some situations, often in acknowledgement or consideration of political and practical realities that can cause a leader to pause when given the opportunity to respond assertively to diversity issues:

> In this community and in the circles that I travel, there sometimes are some awkward moments. We have some folks I need to develop relationships with for a variety of reasons, either in the business community or potential donors, whose views are different from mine. I must say there are times when I feel disappointed when [someone may] say something [offensive or racist] and I can't respond how I really feel. . . . you feel compromised a bit, [but] I'm not going to educate that person. I am faced with the conflict of do I say something and alienate them, or do I [speak up?]. I never join in, of course, that would be truly compromising. But you come out of that and you say, 'Now, I wasn't a profile in courage there', you know? . . . there are certain areas where it is something that I speak about very publicly and openly, and there are other circles that I travel in

> where I just don't talk about it at all because it's a potential liability. That makes me little sad, but unfortunately, it's the nature of the job at this point.

Often a leader faces decisions that require consideration of the long-term impact and perspective of his actions and comments. Inclusive leaders can find themselves thinking they have to stifle their personal views and feelings out of obligation to other aspects of their responsibilities to their institution. While a president may be willing to speak up more in those situations later in his career when he has 'less to lose', each leader has to consider all aspects of the impact from his statements and actions – and according to some participants, at times it may feel like silence is the most appropriate course of action.

Another means of developing credibility as an IWML is through actions that *demonstrate personal vulnerability*, often though public displays of concern, emotion and commitment to the needs of others who are not privileged. Study participants emphasized that a leader must be willing to put himself in vulnerable situations outside of his comfort zone. They also described instances of learning from missteps and mistakes along the way, and asking others from different racial and ethnic groups for input and advice to develop relationships and acquire a better understanding of other cultures.

> There are some people who want the leader to be perfect, know it all, know exactly where we are going, it's clear as a bell, and so forth. And there are times when I do have to act like that maybe more than I feel. . . . it's an educated intuition, I'm sure, but in some areas it's ok to say, 'I'm just like you, we are all working at this, this is work, we're all in it together.' . . . I'm not scared of the issues, I know I'm not perfect, I know I might misstate, but I think the worst thing

> you can do is shut it down. You've got to have the conversation. And as hard as they can be, and sometimes as painful as they might be, you try not to take it personal. . . . when I go into these conversations, I'm always afraid I'm going to say something stupid. I am, I'll own that, I am absolutely afraid I am going to say something wrong, or offend someone. . . . you step in it, and that's ok . . . you wipe off, and you keep moving.

Another participant stressed the importance of a leader openly indicating that he needs help and does not have all the answers:

> It's one thing to go to meetings, it's another thing to go there with a very obvious curiosity. The biggest thing in my opinion is being curious, and not being afraid to ask stupid questions. . . . like being able to ask some African American students, 'Hey, should I say African American or should I say black? Is that ok?' Instead, as presidents, we're always told we're supposed to be the smartest people in every room and we should know that. I've always found it very effective to go into these meetings and just model your own vulnerability and insecurity, and ask questions as opposed to going in and always being brilliant and having the right thing to say. That gets old and tiresome for me and I imagine everybody else as well.

Most of the study participants display a marked willingness to put themselves in awkward or uncomfortable situations in order to connect with and learn from others. In fact, a willingness to be vulnerable, to overcome fears, and risk appearing ignorant about diversity issues, appears to be a key characteristic of an inclusive white male leader. Based on comments by study participants, the more a white male leader puts himself in

these types of situations, the easier it may become until he gets to a point where it is a natural and comfortable part of his behavior and practices.

Taking risks and being vulnerable was also directly tied to *openly acknowledging identity status as a white male* when engaging with people of different identities. Study participants emphasized the importance of acknowledging that their white male identity and experience is distinctly different from the life experiences of many of the people they serve in their leadership role.

> When you start this work, you feel a little odd. I mean, you're at an event and you're the only white guy. People look at you and they wonder, who is this guy and why is he in the room? You do have to kind of get some comfort with that. You have to understand white privilege, male privilege. I mean it's great, I have financial security, I have so many privileges now, and I have to be comfortable talking about that and recognizing that. And I do. Sometimes I say, 'As a white male, I do not fully understand your experience, but here is what I'm thinking, here is what I can do to help.' And I think people appreciate that, that I'm not an expert, I didn't grow up in the same area they grew up in, the same people, issues, same challenges. I mean, I see a policeman walk up, I'm reassured, right? You're a black male, that's not how you feel as this guy is walking toward you [and] it's a whole different kettle of fish. So I think owning it, recognizing it, [is important].

Participants also stressed that white male leaders need to recognize that they will tend to see issues and people through a lens that is specific to their race and gender, limiting their views and understanding of people and issues. "If you are going to lead all people, you

have to have enough multiplicity in your own perspective to understand and appreciate everyone," stated one participant. Recognition that a white male leader brings a foundation of a white male experience and perspective to every issue and conversation is critical to successfully learning from others and building trust with others who are different.

Study participants also acknowledged that their *credibility can be challenged by their identity status*, but their actions and consistent behavior can overcome that obstacle.

> Sure, there are times I feel uncomfortable, there are times that I know that I don't know something because of my privilege, because of the gender piece. But I've been very fortunate in that we've got a lot of leaders here, whether it be based on sexual diversity, whether it be racial diversity . . . we've got a lot of diversity within our collective group here, and so there's real strength. . . . still, just by virtue of being in a leadership position and being a white male, there are definitely times when you've got to recognize that your credibility is compromised just by virtue of that. And you recognize you are being ineffectual as result of those types of perceptions or biases. . . . [it could] be in the LGBT community, where there are things that I don't know or understand. . . . you've always got a blind spot.

Most participants indicated that consistent actions are the only way to establish credibility and show that you can overcome barriers presented by white male status:

> I remember being at a meeting once . . . I was able to initiate work on women's rights and promotion and I remember a woman looking at me, and saying, 'Well, just looking at you, and your gender and the color of your skin, you would not understand this'. Just said that. I didn't respond, but it was said to me. . . . the

> only thing I can say [is], 'Over time, watch my actions' . . . you can say something, but people won't believe you. Simply saying something with nothing to back it up. The only way to develop credibility and trust is by your actions over a period of time.

While white males may have to prove themselves in order to overcome the "inherent skepticism" they will possibly encounter in their diversity work, one study participant proposed that students in particular might not really be concerned about the race or gender of a president:

> Students only want two things: they want to be listened to, and they want to know you care. They don't really care what color you are or what race or gender you are if you can earnestly engage with them and be part of the conversation and help them become part of the solution.

Whatever the focus of others may be, the study participants consistently indicated that the best way for a white male leader to overcome potential barriers from his identity is through consistent actions and sincere engagement with people from different backgrounds.

It is important to recognize that study participants also pointed out that their *identity status can be an asset* at times by allowing them to make statements and take stances that a leader of color might not be able to do:

> If people say, 'Gee, a white male president is spending his time talking about the importance of these issues and he really means it', that gives permission to other people that might be in majority groups to say, 'Yeah, we have a role in this, it isn't just somebody else's issue'. I think [being a white male has] actually helped

> with certain audiences, to help draw them in, to see that many different people can play a role and can be involved in these types of issues and can be passionate about them.

One participant observed that in some ways it may be easier for a white male to engage in diversity work:

> I believe that to achieve a lot of these things, white males are the people who are in the position to create the opportunities for change . . . as long as you can accept the fact that people of color are never going to say, 'Oh yeah, you are one of us'. As long as you can accept that, then in a way it's easier for me. I really feel for the first person who comes along as the first female, or the first African American, to do a job because they have to worry about something that I don't have to worry about, which is the people of color or women coming to them and saying [for example], 'You're not doing enough for women, we were expecting the first woman dean to do more than what you're doing'. Well, you know, if people come to me and say I'm not gay enough or black enough or female enough, then I already know that. I don't have that extra load to carry. But I find that a lot of times when I've hired somebody who is the first African American or female or lesbian to do a particular job, they have many challenges that I don't have, as I'm kind of making the space for them because they have all the people with their identity who may have these very high expectations. I cannot imagine how challenging that must be.

According to a number of study participants, while a white male identity can be a liability or barrier, it can also create opportunities to act as an ally for under-represented

populations by delivering a message that might be best received from a white male in some situations.

Building Relationships

A second strategy used by study participants to address diversity issues is to *work collaboratively with others* to develop diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Participants consistently emphasized the need to engage others rather than acting alone, especially to build relationships with people from all racial and ethnic populations. While study participants focused on actively reaching out to connect with under-represented groups and communities on and off campus, they also stressed the need to work behind the scenes to find ways to help others with their own efforts to promote diversity.

Study participants especially relied on *inclusive processes* to develop and carry out diversity work. Building support over time was deemed critical to the success of diversity initiatives and the participants deliberately worked to ensure that all views are included and shared as part of the dialogue. They reported that it is especially important to establish a process that includes people or groups that may not agree with a majority view, or may even oppose a leader's diversity efforts, to demonstrate inclusion and encourage consideration of all thoughts and ideas as well as influence others to support diversity efforts.

> I think any resistance is not so much that they don't think that the commitment to diversity is a good thing, it's that they sometimes struggle to see how you do it and make sure that it's fair . . . part of what I had to do [at my previous institution] was convince people that what I'm trying to do isn't inconsistent with our values,

> that . . . we're doing things in a way that is consistent with our values and consistent with institutional goals. I think [it's important to make] sure that everybody understands what we are trying to achieve, and that it's not inconsistent. There will be a few people that will be oppositional, and certainly with the same sex partner benefits, we found that. But I think trying to include them in the process is probably the biggest thing . . . when people feel included, most people are not against diversity and inclusion. They just don't necessarily know what you're doing, why you are doing it, and how it's being done in a way that is fair . . . if they have some input, I don't think you face as much resistance.

Some participants also observed that inclusive processes can reach individuals who may be "more toward the racist side of the spectrum" or not as aware or sensitive to race issues. A broad-based effort with diverse groups of people, including views that a leader may not agree with, can help create more opportunities for dialogue and support and ultimately make progress toward diversity goals.

A common theme among study participants is a belief that their success with diversity work relies in large part on *effective communication and presentations* to people from a range of backgrounds, needs and interests. The study participants indicated that they often present the many facets of diversity issues in a variety of ways to appeal to potential supporters:

> As a president, you have to know how to relate to different audiences, to make arguments that will resonate in different places. What do I mean by that? Some people understand the educational benefits and the educational arguments, so on campus we spend a lot of time talking about that. How do faculty members bring

> out the educational benefits of more diverse classes? What does that mean in terms of pedagogy? When you are talking to donors or perhaps to businesses, what may resonate more with them is the economic imperative, to talk about the fact that we have to develop our human capital, we have to produce graduates that will begin to fill all these jobs that you need, that have the skill sets that you need…and for others, the national security imperative is an argument that resonates with them, to make clear that as you produce more diverse graduates, they can be leaders whether it is in the military or in the government. It strengthens the country, makes us more capable of responding to a variety of global challenges in an increasingly interdependent world. I think knowing how to make different arguments that resonate with different audiences is a really important skill set in regard to these issues.

Study participants emphasized the importance of presenting a consistent message. They might change the examples or arguments while retaining the core message or adjust their degree of passion with some audiences. As one participant stated: "You try to use all your tools to bring people along. . . . challenging some so they can stretch further, but not challenging [others] so much that they just quit." Many study participants stressed that they try to understand the perspectives and experiences of each group, and then used an approach that would be most effective and consistent.

Another key activity employed by study participants involved working to *influence and inspire others* to accept and support diversity initiatives:

> I think the role I played first of all is to try to be a catalyst for change, to try to encourage people to take ownership and responsibility and to be involved, to not

> [have it] be just one person's responsibility but it's our collective responsibility. I think as a leader, that's something I try to emphasize at every turn. I've also tried to be visible and supportive of our students of color and multicultural organizations. . . . trying to meet with the students, being a visible presence, talking about these issues, writing about these issues . . . speaking about these issues both on campus and off campus, to be a visible presence, and to just constantly remind the community that this is very much a work in progress.

Study participants reported that they played a variety of roles. At times, they were a facilitator, other times a cheerleader, or supporter or counselor – and sometimes, as one participant stated, a leader has to take a strong stance and simply say: "We're gonna do this."

Study participants also placed great importance on efforts to connect and work with people within their campus community, especially with their *executive leadership team*. Assembling and leading an effective leadership team is a critical part of their success, with an emphasis on developing a shared vision, common values and clear objectives to implement throughout the institution, from top executives to department chairs and team leaders on campus.

> A problem I confronted is you inherit the leadership team, and then you have to kind of work around it. It's a very political environment . . . they've been there longer than you have and they have all kinds of allies for one thing or another. It takes a little while to learn where the land mines are . . . my problem was as President, I had so little confidence in the other five team members, with one exception, that I had to start over again. . . . I was able to pick and choose new

> officers and they were either on the same page with me or I didn't pick them. So I molded the administration around my concerns and thoughts.

Participants indicated that having the right team members is critical to successful diversity work:

> The most critical thing to the success of anything that I've been involved in is finding amazing people to work with. [Get] people with shared values and shared commitments, and you can make amazing things happen. I think presidents don't do the work of the university at all. I mean, the basic work of the university is research and teaching and engagement. [Presidents] do a little bit of public engagement, but I'm not involved in the real work of the university. So the best way to facilitate it is to get other people to share the values that will create circumstances where other people can do the real work. I think the critical thing is [to] get a team that thinks the same about values you think are important, and then get out of their way.

Some study participants stated that they wanted a leadership team to disagree with them at times and "push back" on issues. A number of participants emphasized a need to also push members of their executive team, but others stressed the importance of recruiting the right people so they do not need to push them or hold them accountable. By forming their own team, a number of study participants reported they felt more confident that the team was aligned with their values and objectives related to diversity, freeing them from having to monitor team members.

Study participants also focused on *connecting with the broader campus community* beyond the leadership group. Often they reported playing a role as a

facilitator to support the efforts of others or bring people together for discussion, dialogue and collaborative work. In many cases, they also focused on creating conditions for others to be successful.

> The facilitator [role] is absolutely true. These changes are not going to come about because one person created a committee, or wagged a finger. It will only happen when traction is as close to the ground as possible, [and] I think you facilitate change by infusing it with your own sense of urgency and passion. . . . I don't believe that the rhetoric around change agency is helpful. I think it's a covert way of really forcing command and control leadership, non-inclusive, non-consultative. 'I'm a change agent', meaning, 'Of course, you're not, I have to impose my will upon you as a change agent to force you to do things that you don't know better or you wouldn't do on your own.' I just find that repellent in a lot of ways.

Some participants, however, expressed differing views on the value of acting as a facilitator:

> The facilitator is kind of a milk toast role. . . . it's like, 'We don't want to be telling people what they should do, so we just sort of need to educate them'. . . . I'm on the side of we have to be able to have the crucial conversations, we've got to be able to talk boldly.

Whether playing a role as a facilitator or champion, study participants often deliberately worked to develop their campus as a place for dialogue and discussion about diversity issues, both in theory and in practice, creating a forum to promote greater awareness and understanding of diversity issues within the campus and the external community.

Study participants also reported that they deliberately developed ways to reach out to *connect with faculty, staff and students of color on the campus* through individual interactions as well as participation in events and activities of student clubs and organizations on campus.

> Last year, with Black Lives Matter, for instance, our students wanted to convey that they were in sympathy with some of the issues at the University of Missouri in Columbia. They wanted to do kind of [protest] in our student center here. I got hold of the student leaders and wanted them to know that I supported their efforts and to let them know that I wanted to make sure everyone was safe and secure, and I understood the significance of societal issues we are facing. They were really very appreciative of that and they called me back a couple of times to talk. . . . young people are upset about a lot of things and you can make them real upset by engaging with them by being in their face and telling them that's not appropriate. . . . one of the things I would offer any leader in higher education is when you are in the middle of something that has started to become ugly, make sure that's not the first time you have interaction with your student leaders, including those from groups that might otherwise feel marginalized. You need to have had those interactions early, they need to know who you are, and you need to know them. You need to be willing to listen and really be there with them and not against them.

Study participants made a point to emphasize that this type of outreach work must happen early and up front in a leader's tenure. They repeatedly stressed the need to be present, visible and engaged with people of color on campus. Stepping out of their normal

comfort zone tells students of different racial and ethnic identities that they are valued and their culture is important to the president and the campus – and it sends a strong message to the rest of the institution.

In addition, study participants consistently reported that they deliberately *reached out to under-represented groups in the external community.* They made an effort to participate in cultural events and meet with leaders of the ethnic communities, employing a variety of tactics to connect and establish trust and credibility.

> You're not going to be automatically accepted in the ethnic community…I won't forget, when I first came here, I was meeting with the elders of the [local ethnic] community and they were going on about how this school was just not meeting their needs . . . I got the whole story, the whole history [about how] we didn't treat them well, and sometimes they felt we just didn't want them, that's why they weren't going to school here. I finally had to say to them, 'I hear you and I understand, but I want to tell you that that was then. Today, that's not going to be it going forward, and I want you to call me, to talk to me to tell me every time, no matter what it is, no matter how small, when something happens that happens in a negative way, I want to know.' Now they could have said, 'There's another white guy saying that'. The first time, and the second time, and the third time and the fourth time that issues came up, or I had the opportunity to hire somebody out of [their] community, I took advantage of those. And if I didn't, of course, then I would have deserved their first suspicion.

One study participant described the importance of learning the language of the local native community and regularly using the language at campus and community events:

> People like that. . . . a young women who was serving food [told me] as I was walking past her, 'Everyone appreciates the fact that you name yourself [in our language], we pay attention to that'.

Another leader emphasized the importance of attending funerals of diversity leaders:

> There is nothing more powerful than acknowledging people and being there in person to celebrate a life. People take notice of those things, symbolically you are representing the university as well as yourself.

In general, participants displayed a common focus to "reach across the barriers or the boundaries" that often exist between education, the campus and the community to develop relationships and build a "pipeline" for youth of color to access higher education.

Some study participants emphasized this type of relationship building as a *two-way street*, bringing a diverse variety of people and activities from the community to the campus and connecting the institution and its resources to the community, with the president serving in a liaison role.

> [I play a] role as somewhat of a semi-permeable membrane, with my responsibility to be out in the community and listening to the community and bringing back what I hear from them, back into the institution. At the same time, to be listening in the institution and taking it back out to the community. . . . I [have] the opportunity to use my position as a sort of a bully pulpit to describe what's possible, to engage with the community, with our faculty, and to try to set us in a direction and create a sense of hope that we really could become something special. It [will] take lots of work on our part and we need help from a

> lot of sources, but it wouldn't be done simply by a president decreeing things internally.

These types of activities were often very selective, in many cases focused on specific issues and needs within select population groups or areas of the community:

> There are quite incredible numbers of foster kids in our [area]. . . . in terms of transition on to [college], probably only two or three that make it on to post-secondary education. That's a real problem. . . . I said we're going to give free tuition to every foster kid that comes to [our institution]. . . . we just waive the tuition. I do it based on the notion that we've got some empty seats in classes, why not fill them up? . . . they get the education, they get the income, they can break those bonds of poverty, and indeed become part of and a contributor to these communities in which they live rather than constantly fighting an uphill battle and not feel like they are participating, and feeling less than. So we take these foster kids in and provide them support. . . . we help people recognize that our responsibility as a post-secondary institution is to make sure that these kids are getting the opportunity so that they can contribute down the line. I'll tell you it hit right on that set of values that I talked about earlier . . . we talk about access, we talk about respect, we talk about support. It's amazing how the school has rallied around this in terms of recognizing the importance of our role in these communities we serve and ensuring that people have access and support to go to post-secondary education.

It is clear from participants' accounts that they rarely sat back and waited for the community to come to them – they got off campus and met with under-represented

groups to find ways to connect the community and campus to address issues of diversity, equity and social justice. In some cases, they also expected or required members of their leadership team and other key administrators to get out into the community on a regular basis to interact and develop relationships with under-represented populations to set the stage for partnership efforts.

Using Positional Influence

Study participants reported that they encountered considerable opportunities to influence diversity issues due to the perceived authority and power attributed to their position by the campus and community. In a number of instances, study participants described various forms of *positional privilege* that they felt indicated their executive position as president has greater significance and meaning for others than their personal identity status as a white male:

> I am a white male and I am a college president . . . a lot of times, my interest in bringing my presidential standing to an issue involving students of color and typically expanding access and success initiatives is something that is typically greeted by those populations. . . . it was the bringing of the role of the President to support those [issues] as worthy primary initiatives of the college that was greeted with enthusiasm. My whiteness was sort of ancillary.

In general, many study participants appeared to feel that their executive position served as their primary identity, possibly to the point where their personal identity as a white male may be secondary, and in some cases might actually be relatively unimportant in their work as an inclusive leader.

Participants also indicated that they used their executive authority to *direct and influence direct reports* and other staff in the institution about diversity issues:

> I've tried to sort of spread the wealth if you will, to get [the leadership team] involved so that each of them feels ownership. . . . [encourage them] to incorporate it into the work they are doing in each of their respective areas, and to see why it matters, whether it is student affairs, or academic affairs, or administration. . . . I think getting people to play a leadership role in each of their areas, and to think creatively about how they can promote diversity and access in the work that they do, is a really key part of it. Then it has a multiplier effect, it's not just one person talking about it and doing things, it's getting everybody in their respective areas to think about what they can do. . . . you have to start some place. You may not be able to do everything all at once . . . I think just helping people realize that there is a lot that you can do even with limited resources, that this is something that can be incorporated into their work and it requires intentionality, and a certain kind of mind set is important.

Some study participants reported that they push their senior male administrators to engage in professional development activities to help them stay current on diversity research and issues. Others required diversity goals for their team and link those goals to pay incentives at times. In some cases, participants reported that on occasion they took a very hard stance and directed administrators, staff or faculty to take specific actions in support of diversity objectives – and in a few instances, individuals were fired if they did not take action as needed.

Use of Data

A number of leaders *used data to drive their actions* in support of diversity, drawing on research material to support ideas that they present to their campus and community. They often used data to challenge current practices and thinking, especially with demographic data that demonstrated the growing presence and needs of minority populations.

> What I've found to be very effective is when you show them the literature that shows that this strategy or pedagogy demonstrates increases in outcomes for this demographic group. I find that people sit up and listen to that. You have to show them and say, 'Here, look what's happened here. This strategy has closed the opportunity gap for Hispanics' . . . a simple thing like a good solid syllabus, research shows that improves completion in a class for under-represented populations. It's because they might be more insecure when they come in a class and worry about where it is going and drop out, but if they have a road map, now they are talking about pathways, that if you do X, Y and Z, then this is what is going to happen. I've had faculty who have not been that into solidly detailed syllabi and they said, 'Huh, if I can increase my completion rate by having a better syllabus, I'll do that'. So give people examples.

Study participants also emphasized the importance of looking at research and diversity efforts at other institutions to learn as much as possible about successful practices in order to acquire a strong understanding of the issues to encourage substantive discussion based on facts rather than politics. In fact, study data suggest that combining supportive

research data with the power of a genuine passion for diversity can be a key difference maker for an inclusive white male leader.

Study participants also placed great emphasis on *using data to demonstrate outcomes and results* of their own institution's diversity initiatives and programs. Measuring progress and impact can show how diversity efforts produce positive improvements as anticipated and intended. Specific measurable goals also helped establish concrete objectives and provided a way to assess progress and success. Some study participants also used data to assess if an institution actually has the right diversity goals, programs and measures in place to begin with:

> I realized that most white leaders [think] that all they had to do to be able to check the box for diversity was to have your heart in the right place, you know? To be able to talk about diversity and mean it . . . at one point a big turn for me was realizing that's not good enough, that's not even close to good enough. That's what changed me, saying, 'Ok, have you increased the student success rate?' That's why I say I don't feel like I've been a great leader. I can't tell you that I've [made a difference]. I mean . . . what are we, [at the bottom of] the country for achievement gap? That's just outrageous, we should all be outraged, we should wake up in the morning outraged about that. . . . show me the results, show me the increase or the decrease in achievement gap, show me the graduation, completion, retention. Show me the number of student groups you have this year for the student population that has a sense of belonging, that you didn't have two years ago. Part of it is just being unrelentingly focused on actual outcomes.

A number of study participants emphasized a need to have data that clearly show how programs and initiatives are making a difference, especially for diversity initiatives. Data can be especially important, according to participants, to help a governing board understand the significance and impact of diversity initiatives, especially with outreach and access to minority populations.

Working within the System

The fifth primary method used by study participants to initiate action to promote diversity, equity and inclusion involves a strategy to *implement change from within the system*. Even when study participants acted as conscious change agents, they typically worked first to modify or use existing policies and practices. One of the most common actions reported by study participants involved *developing and promoting diversity programs on campus*, and participants reported varying degrees of involvement in diversity program development:

> It's important, especially at the start of something, to talk about your support of it. We had all-college meetings once a month and I would typically have someone come up who was about to start something new on the college to talk about it, and talk about how people could contact him or her about joining the effort and that sort of thing. . . . I thought it was important to sponsor it, I thought it was important to speak with the original work groups on these things to get the original charge to the committee. And to give them some money, and some release time.

Study participants focused a great deal on developing *learning experiences* to introduce people to diversity. Participants stressed the need to connect theory and research to the

community by creating experiences that provided students with opportunities to apply classroom learning to real life and real people, particularly those who are different from them. Study abroad programs in particular were valued as critical learning experiences for diversity awareness:

> I think people can be taught [about diversity], but I think part of the teaching is to give them the experiences. You send people on a global [learning] experience, it's a wake-up call. I don't think we can necessarily teach them by having them watch some webinar, you know? I don't think that's sufficient instruction, but I think experiential learning, you could structure a curriculum that had experiential components to it and I think you could teach them. But it would have to have that experiential component.

Study participants shared a strong belief in the importance of experiential learning and a number of participants stated that it is an institution's responsibility to expose students to a range of cultural experiences, especially in white majority communities and institutions.

Study participants also reported focused efforts to *integrate diversity efforts into their institutional planning* to make diversity a strategic priority for their institution. Some participants encouraged or required units within the institution to include diversity goals in their planning efforts with the intent to embed diversity into the institutional structure:

> We've embedded it in our strategic plan, so you can't be here and not see it, and you can't not pay attention to it at some level. It's out in the open, it's visible, it's talked about. . . . we've established the formula framework, we've established

> leadership positions, we've promised, we've made commitments to be very visible about the reality.

Participants also relied on extensive dialogue to develop diversity plans and goals within their institutional community. Developing measurable goals in a collaborative fashion ensured regular assessment to demonstrate accountability and show success while also creating support and buy-in, especially from resistant colleagues:

> It's got to be a continuing holistic effort, there's not one silver bullet. I think it's creating a campus climate, and a whole suite of programs that work together over time, and that involves a lot of people so it becomes deeply woven into the fabric of the institution to have that kind of commitment to access and opportunity going forward. That's really what I am hoping to accomplish here as President. We have diversity - diversity and access and inclusion - as one of the core qualities in our strategic plan. The advantage of that is the plan has a lot of metrics and accountabilities associated with it, so every year you are reporting to the board about our accomplishments and what we're doing and what more we need to do.

Study participants actively strove to develop strategic plans and actions from broad campus and community dialogue. A number of participants made a point to emphasize the need to take adequate time to present issues and initiatives rather than forcing issues or personal views on their campus and community:

> I never try to tell people, 'I know how it is, so I'll tell you what to do' . . . part of my actions is a transparency. [I share with] my group of folks that we pull in from the community [and say], 'Here's where we are, here's the achievement gap, here's where we are in the staffing of our institution. Some of these don't look too

> good, how can we work together to fix it?' So I'm very transparent in that regard. Because I'm not feeling like I need to defend the institution, I feel like I am trying to grow the institution and I want to engage you, in this case, with various ethnic communities . . . and in some way move forward. It's a mutual responsibility of all of us in the community. I have some resources that I can bring to the table, help me bring them in the best way possible. Those are the kinds of conversations that we have.

A common point of emphasis for many participants was that their diversity work is a collective effort to improve access and completion for under-served populations. As one leader stated, it's "not just a college thing . . . it's [an effort] to create a culture of college among the community." Idea generation frequently occurred at the most direct level possible to include community members and campus staff who worked closely with students of color to help drive diversity efforts at an operational level in ways that directly benefit targeted populations.

In addition to integrating diversity initiatives into institutional planning, study participants also worked to *modify the organizational structure* of their institution to integrate diversity initiatives and positions into campus operations instead of creating separate diversity functions attached to the existing structure. Participants paid attention to the symbolic aspects of how they create diversity offices and positions, often locating them physically and organizationally in a way that emphasizes their relevance and importance to the institution.

> My predecessor had made a conscious decision not to act on a recommendation to create a chief diversity officer. I spent at least six months, maybe more, educating

> myself about the pros and cons of that kind of a position. . . . I ultimately decided [to create a broader position] expanding the scope of mission . . . to true inclusion, with the idea that inclusiveness needed to be a core value that was embedded in everything that we do and as part of our strategic plan. . . . there is a tendency for folks to say 'Ok, well that's his job, or that's her job'. I embrace the notion that creating an inclusive environment is everyone's responsibility, including mine. Because I'm the chief executive officer, that then means I'm also then the chief diversity and inclusion officer. If that's the case, what I need is not a person to do diversity and inclusion, but a person to advise me and the university leadership and others about how to create a more inclusive environment. So I made a very conscious choice to frame the responsibility as a responsibility that we all have, so therefore the person is not the officer for diversity and inclusion, but rather responsible for providing us with guidance and advice to get us there. It's still early, we're only maybe eighteen months into this effort. There are certain things that I think are going well. We've become a much more inclusive community when it comes to LGBTQ issues. If you look at our student demographics, over the last seven years, the number of students who identify as African American, Latino, or two or more races has virtually doubled in just seven years. But we aren't making a dent at the leadership level, and we're holding our own at the staff level and we're treading water at the faculty level. So we've got a lot more work to do.

Participants also emphasized the importance of recruiting good people and positioning them within the existing institutional structure, along with the necessary resources to

successfully develop and implement diversity initiatives – and then "get yourself and other obstacles out of their way" and hold the positions accountable.

One of the action strategies reported by nearly every study participant involved *using hiring opportunities* as an effective vehicle to introduce more diversity to a campus. Hiring processes offer opportunities to bring new people in to the campus community, and study participants consistently described deliberate hiring strategies, especially for faculty of color.

> When we hire, we have to do things differently. One of the things I was most proud of [in my last position], we hired eight new tenure-track faculty members, and three of the eight were African American. I think our success in that regard was attributed to the fact that we said we did things differently. I insisted that the search committee take a different approach. Frankly I got crosswise with the [university counsel] because she feared that our recruiting strategies would actually cross the line in terms of too aggressively targeting minority candidates . . . I told her I was willing to get sued over this. What we did was instead of relying simply on the standard hiring process, we had a research assistant [go] through the bios of every faculty member of color in place at either a third or fourth tier [school]. The idea was that we'd never get someone from Harvard, right? But maybe we could get someone from a comparably ranked or lesser ranked school. So we gathered up all of the names and bios, then the search committee culled them down to those who were at a stage of their career when they might be willing to change, and we just reached out and called them. Long story short, the pool was much more diversified, and in the space of two years, we

> hired three African Americans. So the approach I take now is when possible, we can't simply be passive. If we keep doing the same things, we're going to get the same pool, particularly at a place like [this]. . . . we have to work even harder.

Study participants also pointed out that temporary staff hires and non-tenure track faculty hires offer opportunities to recruit more candidates from under-represented populations. They stressed that it is critically important to build a more diverse faculty and staff that reflects the increasingly diverse pool of students and provides more options for role models.

Changing hiring practices also involves efforts to *work with search committee members* and hiring departments to develop better understanding and greater awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion issues. Study participants reported using hiring opportunities to help people understand how often we hire people like themselves without even realizing it, whether it is due to the search criteria required for a position or present in a bias in evaluations of applicants and finalists for positions.

> One of the first times I got to make a hire was when we were hiring someone to be the [accreditation] coordinator. One of the issues was whether the person needed to have a Ph.D. and I said ,'No', in part because I didn't think it really related to what I needed in the role, but I also knew sometimes we put criteria in jobs that aren't really required and it decreases the diversity of the pool. So I consciously said, 'Let's not do that'. The person we ended up hiring was an African American female who clearly was the best candidate. We didn't hire her for that reason, in my mind she was far and away the best, and maybe the best hire I ever made. If we had made the wrong decision at the beginning and said

> you had to have a doctorate, we wouldn't have had her in the pool, because she didn't have a doctorate. But she had exactly the experience, a great personality, she had everything. . . . that's one situation where I think I learned a lot . . . when I'm looking at jobs, I'm thinking let's only put in criteria that absolutely has to be in there, not just what would be nice . . . I think it affects what you end up with in the pool, and it may end up affecting who you hire.

A number of study participants indicated that they felt a need to be very aggressive and play a direct role in the search process. In some cases, participants reported that they required campus units to submit a diversity recruitment plan at the start of a search process to ensure adequate efforts are in place.

Study participants also emphasized the critical importance of their *handling of personnel issues,* including hiring decisions and how and why they may dismiss some individuals from positions, especially in diversity roles or in instances when a terminated individual is a member of an under-represented group. Personnel decisions reflect institutional priorities and values and test a leader's sincerity and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Bringing a new person on board also offers an opportunity for the institution to reinforce its values and commitment to diversity through orientation and training of new faculty and staff, demonstrating to new hires that the institution is serious about diversity as a priority.

> We are viewed as a place that is open and inclusive. I don't know the numbers but I'm confident that we have a much greater than average number of employees in the LGBTQ group, and we've been able to recruit some incredible talent from around the country from that class because they know that they will be welcomed

> here. That's an incredible sustainable competitive advantage with that group of people collectively, which is a significant part of the population. If you can compete for the best, that's phenomenal. . . . I think we have been able to recruit talent that otherwise we might not have been able to.

Some participants described situations when they faced the challenge of dealing with an under-performing member of their leadership team:

> As a president, surround yourself with the people that not only have the right values but are also effective. One of the perils is if you select someone to be one of your champions in this arena and they do not perform well, it is a major problem. . . . if someone is one of your diversity champions and they are not being effective, and they are not performing well, then perhaps that isn't well understood. If you were to just abruptly remove them, your commitment to diversity and inclusion would be questioned. . . . the real point here is, the hires that you make to advance the cause will be among the most visible, the most critical and the most difficult to reverse if you make a mistake.

It is interesting to note that although study participants clearly worked to develop ways to increase diversity within their institution, many of them also regularly emphasized that they made a deliberate point to focus on hiring the best person for a position regardless of their status and identity:

> In the end, it all comes down to hiring in so many ways, and I am adamantly opposed to anything other than hiring the best person. I can say we're not doing any diverse individual a favor by putting them into a position that they are not ready for in the interests of diversity. I can point to examples where they haven't

> been successful and it's actually set them way back as a result, for what that's worth.

Some participants also reported open communication with diverse colleagues on campus to discuss hiring and firing decisions, especially when actions could appear to conflict with institutional interests in recruiting and retaining more faculty and staff from under-represented populations.

Study participants also emphasized that an inclusive leader must strive to *create an inspiring vision* for his institution that encourages support and buy-in for diversity, equity and inclusion issues and initiatives. An effective leader should describe the future for the campus and suggest what is possible or necessary to move toward that future state:

> I had the opportunity to use my position . . . to describe what's possible, to engage with the community, with our faculty, and to try to set us in a direction and create a sense of hope that we really could become something special. It would take lots of work on our part and we would need help from a lot of sources, but it wouldn't be done simply by a president decreeing things internally to the university.

Inspiration often comes about by simply presenting a consistent and recurring message:

> One of the most important things I can do as a leader is to continue, in many different venues and many different setting with many different constituencies, to talk about why these issues are important and how they go to the core of our educational mission. To try to inspire people about continuing the efforts and not getting tired, or persevering in the face of whether it's financial challenges or political or social challenges, to recognize that this is the right thing to do and it's

> an important thing for us to be doing. As a leader, one of the other things that I really try to emphasize with all our folks here is that diversity and excellence go hand in hand; they are not two competing concepts. I think the more that I make that clear from my position, the more it empowers all the people around me to think about that and to make that point, to think in that manner in their respective offices.

Some study participants believed their role in part was to help others see that everyone can contribute to the diversity effort, including other white males: "Getting people into that mindset makes it less divisive, when people can start to see that we all benefit, we can all learn and grow together." Participants also shared a view that higher education must be a leader for diversity, especially by getting to a point where the campus not only mirrors the community, it also presents a vision of where the community and society as a whole should be in the future.

Some study participants also emphasized a need to *consider the context and culture of their campus* to determine the implementation strategy for their actions for diversity, with special consideration of the timing of their efforts:

> Now, to be fair though, I can say, I didn't do this the first year. I saw the issue my first year, but I didn't take the issue on until my fourth year. I tried to create enough good will, and political cash and support, [until] people say, 'Well, he's ok'. I think if I had led with this, it might have been harder. It's kind of easier to do it on the inside, if you will. So I tried to balance it. It doesn't mean the issue wasn't there four years ago, it doesn't mean I shouldn't have taken it on four years ago, but I felt like it was time to do it, and they were ready for it and they

> could move with me on it. Maybe I could have done it earlier, maybe not . . . I have a [new team member] now. I needed a partner, I needed allies that I could depend on, and I told her, 'I want you to get settled in, get your first year in, then I want to do this'. . . . I wanted to engage the cabinet to make sure to bring them along, that they would support this. Because it's a big effort, and it creates discomfort. It does. These are hard issues, and not everybody is in a place where they can say, 'Yeah, let's talk about this, let's talk about how I have privilege, I don't even know what you are talking about'. Let's have that conversation. So they are there now – now, do I think they are all there? No, I don't, but enough are there that we are able to move the dial and move this forward.

Good intentions are not enough to become an inclusive white male leader, and it is apparent from the accounts of study participants that simply recognizing an issue or problem is not enough on its own to justify action. Finding the right timing and opportunity to create the most impact and greatest likelihood of success is critical to making progress with diversity efforts – the wrong timing can actually turn a well-intended or much needed action into a setback.

Study participants also indicated that they worked to implement incremental change by basing their efforts in a *consistent system of values and established institutional processes* to reduce resistance and adapt change efforts to match the existing structure and processes within their institution. Participants emphasized the importance of having a clear and consistent set of active institutional values that reflected diversity goals and objectives, with a regular review and reinforcement or revision of the values.

The values should also be consciously integrated into the hiring, planning and decision making processes for developing diversity efforts.

> It always starts when you do the initial hiring, and you ask, 'Do they have the values that you've established, and the culture that you've established in the college?' If they don't, are they able to? It starts right there when you are doing the hiring. And I can honestly tell you, those that don't have that . . . tend to self-select themselves out of the institution. We very purposefully identified a very intentional culture at [our] institution. We've identified the values behind it. When we do orientations for new employees, they go through all of those values, we talk about those values every year. We talk about them at our in-services. They are fifty percent of our performance evaluations, based on the demonstration of the values. We've identified the behaviors that we would expect to see, that are evidence that you are in fact incorporating those values in the decisions and the work that you do. We've had the values, we've separately discussed each of them with our board. This is very intentional work on our part, and I can see the difference.

Institutional values provided leaders with a foundation for their actions, decisions and conflict resolution. Study participants indicated that part of their role is to not only respect and model those values, but also to regularly remind the campus community about those values to make sure they are not lost along the way.

Study participants also often employed a *long-term approach* to their work for diversity, equity and social justice, focusing their efforts on developing deeply rooted cultural change that will survive beyond their tenure as president or chancellor. This

approach requires a visionary mindset and a conscious role as a change agent that challenges the status quo and provides an idea of a future direction and reality for the institution as a more diverse and inclusive campus:

> I am a change agent who is committed to changing culture in order to achieve the change that we need, and the change in culture only occurs over long periods of time. In my very first address to the campus when I laid out that vision, I laid it out as a ten-year vision, not that we would just do this, but it is a ten-year vision and there would be three distinct phases that I saw us going through. I really do believe our role as president, particularly today in this environment, is to be change agents but we have to recognize that you've got to change the culture of your own institution if you want it to outlive you as president. That's a long-term process and requires a steady hand over a long period of time.

One participant also emphasized the value of considering diversity efforts within a broader historical framework:

> You've got to be in it for the long haul, you've got to understand that there are going to be setbacks, there are going to be challenges, there are going to be frustrations. You've got to have that long-term perspective on these issues, they are not issues that appear overnight and they are not issues that are going to disappear overnight. You have to get that long view of American history, the history of higher education, the history of your own institution, and of your role. These are institutions that are going to be around for a long time to come after all of us have retired and moved on. Having that big picture sense and that long–term perspective and persistence are most important.

Study participants emphasized the need for achieving deep cultural change through extended effort over time. Diversity must be embedded into the organization and spread throughout the campus in order to have lasting results, and participants recognized the importance of a shared commitment and sense of responsibility for diversity displayed by every member of the institution rather than championed only by the president.

Summary of Effective Action Strategies

The primary means by which study participants transformed their understanding of identity, race and privilege into actions to promote diversity, equity and social justice involves a focus on the human aspects of their efforts. The participants stressed the importance of *focusing on their own individual behavior.* They regularly assessed and monitored their personal habits, actions and practices to develop a behavior, identity and reputation as a leader who is aware of race and identity issues and genuinely committed to promoting diversity, equity and social justice on their campus and in their community. In addition, study participants focused on *building a strong network of interpersonal relationships* on their campus and in their community, with both white and minority individuals and groups, to develop a foundation for dialogue and partnership that informs and drives their diversity efforts. The combined focus on personal behavior and interpersonal relationships helped them establish a foundation of trust and a reputation for credibility that positioned each leader as an advocate and ally for marginalized and oppressed people despite their privileged status as white males.

In addition to a focus on personal and interpersonal aspects of leadership behavior, study participants also employed three types of strategies to initiate and execute successful diversity efforts in their institutions: use of their executive position; use of data

to support their work; and implementing change within the existing organizational structure. Some study participants observed that their positional identity might matter more to others than their personal identity as a white male leader. The authority and respect awarded their executive position offered them a platform to promote their views and ideas on diversity as well as provided them with a direct source of power to influence individual and collective behavior and thinking on their campus, in their community and within their circle of peers. Study participants were also consciously aware of how their executive position provided access to individuals and groups and allowed them to direct attention and resources toward activities aimed at promoting diversity, equity and social justice.

The conscious use of data and information also provides a white male leader with a key resource to inform and support his diversity efforts. A number of study participants reported that they shaped their ideas and thinking about diversity through information that they gathered from research, publications and successful diversity efforts in other setting. In many cases, leaders also used reports, data and best practices to encourage others on campus and in the community to consider and embrace diversity efforts and change initiatives. Data help a leader base his diversity efforts in facts, evidence and theory gathered from others to support his personal views and goals, providing an objective aspect to his diversity work that complements his personal beliefs and aspirations for his institution.

Study participants also consistently reported a conscious strategy to implement change initiatives within the existing organizational framework of the institution. Participants did not typically employ radical or extreme efforts to implement diversity

initiatives – rather, they sought ways to incorporate and integrate change into the organizational structure and processes already in place in their institution. Study participants often introduced change by adding new positions and people, proposing new or modified programs, and encouraging new or revised policies and practices. While the participants' accounts demonstrated that a successful inclusive white male leader must have courage to take a stand and challenge the status quo, those types of instances happen selectively and only when necessary. Study participants typically worked to implement diversity initiatives in ways that fit into the existing organizational structure as much as possible to build understanding, buy-in and support. Striving to achieve incremental change over an extended period was also preferred over deliberate disruption that could easily backfire and create problematic conditions and attitudes within the campus or the community.

Action Theory

In this section, I compare study findings with existing research related to how an inclusive white male leader (IWML) converts his understanding of identity, race and privilege into strategies and actions to promote diversity, equity and social justice through his leadership work in higher education. This critical step transforms understanding into agency, with behavior and actions aimed at achieving a defined and desired purpose or outcome (Erikson, 2007). Key questions to consider at this stage include: How do study participants convert their personal awareness and interests into action in their leadership role? Do they actively address issues related to their white male status? Have they made a positive difference within their institution and community in regard to diversity, equity and social justice issues? And if so, how?

As revealed in the analysis of the motivation and understanding stages of the IWML development process, the action stage also relates to both internally and externally-oriented theories. Internally focused theory addresses how a leader's personal behavior and identity affects his leadership behavior and practices (Kendall, 2006; Pinterits et al, 2009). Externally oriented analysis relates to a number of theory areas: interpersonal relations (Barlas et al, 2012; Kendall, 2006); organizational change (Kezar, 2008); and inspirational vision (Bryson, 1995). The study findings are especially reflective of theory that considers the connections between internal or personal aspects and external or organizational elements to achieve cultural change (Chavez, 2013; Gallardo, 2013; Kezar & Eckel, 2008).

Personal Identity Theory

Leadership efforts by white male leaders to promote diversity, equity and social justice require consideration of theory related to an individual's focus on personal beliefs, principles and practices. Pinterits et al (2009) emphasized moral aspects of activism for diversity, equity and social justice, with a specific focus on the significance of remorse over white privilege as motivation to understand white privilege and, in turn, combat privilege. Kendall (2006) focused on the need for white people to recognize and accept their white racial group identity and take responsibility to "step out and step up" through action aimed at confronting privilege (p. 95).

Study participants supported aspects of these theories in their conscious efforts to develop a genuine personal commitment to diversity that is actively and consistently reflected in their individual behavior and actions on diversity related issues. Many study participants described efforts to consciously recognize and acknowledge the differences

between their own personal identity and life experiences and the experiences of others who are different from them, primarily in terms of their life experiences, background, upbringing and general social status. Approximately half of the participants reported that they consciously considered how their personal identity and status in terms of race and gender provided them with some degree of unearned privilege. They also reported that they reflected on these differences and actively worked to make others aware of the meaning and impact of these differences, including the impact on institutional policies and practices. In some instances, participants indicated that courage was required to take risks or take a stand to do 'what is right' – in turn, often gaining the benefit of being seen as a strong and committed leader.

Study participants also frequently emphasized the importance of getting out of their personal comfort zone to engage with people who are different from them. They especially stressed the need to be open and vulnerable in their interactions with others who are different from them. Most important, study participants made a point to consistently show that diversity, equity and social justice issues are personal priorities for them rather than simply expectations they must meet. Participants frequently commented on the importance of being adamant at times about critical issues, including recognizing the need to challenge the thinking and behavior of others when necessary, especially other white people. They encouraged other white leaders to call out bad behavior within their campus and community, particularly overt or hidden racism, discrimination or oppression. Last, and certainly not least, study participants consistently pressed the point that an inclusive white male leader must consciously accept a responsibility to act as a role model in all aspects of his behavior. An inclusive leader cannot just focus on how he

conducts himself in his formal leadership role - he must provide a fulltime example as a committed and concerned advocate for diversity, equity and social justice. This commitment goes beyond personal behavior, as participants also emphasized the importance of finding ways to make personal sacrifices and contributions to the diversity cause through donations of resources, time and money from both institutional and personal means.

Interpersonal Approach

A key finding in this study relates to theory that links the second IWML developmental stage of awareness and understanding with the third stage of action. Kendall (2006) focused on the importance of daily conversations with others about the impact of whiteness and increased personal relationships with oppressed people to help white people develop the ability to become allies and change agents for social justice. These engagement efforts, according to Kendall, help white people develop compassion for diverse others and gain greater understanding of the experiences and challenges of non-privileged groups to inform and drive leadership practices and actions to promote diversity efforts. Barlas et al. (2012) also emphasized the importance of white people engaging in interactions with both white and non-white people through a combination of reflection *on* action and reflection *in* action during challenging interpersonal situations. A willingness by white leaders to engage in difficult conversations serves as a starting point for an interactive process of reflection, interaction, learning and action, according to Barlas et al, typically accomplished through ongoing interpersonal encounters with white and non-white others that focus on issues of race, racism and privilege.

These strategies stress the importance of engagement by white male leaders with people from all populations and identity groups. Combining personal reflection with active engagement provides a way for white male leaders to create discussion about issues of identity, race, privilege and social justice that set the stage for developing initiatives with others to take action on these issues. The study data support this view, with personal engagement with diverse others standing out as a primary means of activity used by study participants to develop and initiate actions aimed at promoting diversity equity and inclusion in their institutions.

Participants frequently described efforts to act as a liaison between their campus and under-represented populations in the external community. They also reported deliberate efforts to engage with the diverse populations of students, faculty and staff within their institution through contact and dialogue with individuals and groups on campus. At times, they aimed these efforts at hearing concerns to develop an awareness of needs to address; at other times, they created dialogue about initiatives in order to create understanding and build support. Participants also reported efforts to create collaboration with groups on campus and in the community, including K-12 schools, other higher education leaders, and community organizations. It is evident from the accounts of study participants that diversity initiatives rarely if ever develop in a vacuum or as a solo effort by a leader. In nearly all cases, their diversity efforts were based in interactions with a full range of people, white and non-white, on campus and in the community.

Operational Approach

Kezar (2007) emphasized the need for leaders to use their authority over organizational and operational elements within their institution to influence how diversity, equity and social justice issues influence policies, practices and actions. This type of activity often takes the form of efforts by white male leaders to incorporate diversity elements into institutional planning efforts, which is a fairly safe form of activism. In contrast, direct involvement or intervention by white male leaders in specific issues, practices and policies often puts a leader in a much more visible and possibly controversial or sensitive position. A willingness to take on this type of risk and responsibility is critical to leaders "engaging in the creative aspect of politics and conflict that can help to create a new future on campus" (Kezar, 2008, p. 435).

Study participants reported a variety of actions and strategies that support Kezar's theory. They focused on organizational initiatives within their institutional structure to promote diversity, equity and social justice, using their position as a platform for initiating dialogue and action on diversity issues. Participants also described playing active roles within their organizational structure as a champion, instigator, supporter and facilitator, using their executive position to raise issues, prompt action, or make statements emphasizing the importance of diversity issues. In addition, control over resources and the symbolic power of the presidency can be as important as the actions that a leader may take to promote and support diversity.

Study participants also emphasized the need to link diversity efforts to the overall mission of the institution in order to truly integrate it into the campus and position diversity for long-term impact and success. Participants paid attention to how diversity

positions and offices are located within the institution's organizational chart and hierarchy, and they frequently reported using planning processes to promote diversity within their institution. They also emphasized the importance of defining clear goals, targets and outcomes for diversity initiatives, including assessment and reporting measures that hold the institution accountable and create a system of documentation that proves the impact and benefits of diversity efforts.

One of the strategies reported by study participants that relates to organizational theory involved the use of hiring opportunities as a key way to promote diversity, equity and social justice interests. This type of activity occurred in a variety of forms: setting goals for achieving a diverse campus community that match or exceed community demographics; creating focused hiring initiatives aimed at recruiting and hiring a more diverse pool of people, especially for faculty positions; using the flexibility allowed with temporary, emergency, short-term and non-tenure hires to introduce more diversity in terms of people, experiences and ideas; and deliberately seeking ways to create positions for members of under-represented groups in traditional and non-traditional ways to work alongside faculty and students.

Transformational Approach

The study data also support key theories related to leadership of transformational change. Bryson (1995) asserted that visionary leadership should provide a picture of success along with a plan to achieve it, with an appeal to moral interests and ideals by presenting "a useful tension between the world as it is and the world as we would like it" (p. 158). Study participants reflected aspects of this leadership strategy in their reports of conscious efforts aimed at inspiring their campus community to persist with diversity

efforts as ‘the right thing to do’ as well as a way to provide institutional excellence that can benefit everyone.

Kezar and Eckel (2008) emphasized the importance of leaders working to create new cultural values and preferences for the organization. The study data present some conflicting views about the effectiveness and appropriateness of intentional leadership efforts to implement cultural change, but a majority of participants reported a conscious desire to act as a change agent for their institution and/or community in order to promote diversity, equity and social justice. Their efforts ranged from deliberately employing a significant change initiative to simply playing an active role to introduce new ideas and more diverse elements to their campus. Study participants also frequently reported a view that change achieved over an extended period will create a new culture that will outlast the president’s tenure.

In addition to consciously acting as a deliberate change agent, participants frequently described efforts to support and delegate the work of creating and implementing change to others, often by bringing key people to campus from the outside. Many change efforts were also opportunistic, as study participants reported that they watched for conditions and situations that would allow them to push agendas and initiatives for change. This strategy required a leader to pay close attention to the culture and state of his campus in order to recognize when change is needed or possible, providing support for Kezar and Eckel’s (2008) theory that an institution’s experience with diversity influences how a leader introduces or promotes a change agenda.

Study participants most often described strategies and actions that corresponded to ‘early progress’ institutions (Kezar & Eckel, 2008) in their emphasis on personal

vision and charisma to motivate others to support diversity efforts. Participants frequently reported that they paid specific attention to people from under-represented groups to understand their needs and concerns as well as ensure that members of those groups feel noticed and appreciated by the institution. Some participants also reported efforts to engage in critical conversations with others to create intellectual stimulation and collaborative initiatives, tactics that are typical of mid-level progress institutions. A few participants indicated that they also worked to deliberately appeal to higher moral interests within the campus community to create diversity initiatives, a strategy typical of institutions at later stages of experience with diversity issues (Kezar & Eckel, 2008).

Cultural Humility Theory

The study data also support Gallardo's (2013) theory of *cultural humility*. Gallardo emphasized that leaders need to acknowledge the connection between privilege and power and recognize the significance of personal identity as well as the complex interaction of multiple identities. A number of study participants noted the importance of their racial and gender identity and the potential for bias and prejudice related to their identity and status as white male leaders. Participants also reported conscious consideration of how their actions can develop an identity as an ally for oppressed people and as an advocate for diversity, equity and social justice to serve as a role model for other white people to encourage similar actions for diversity (Gallardo & Ivey, 2013). The most assertive leaders reported some aspects of *praxis* (Freire, 1970; Gallardo, 2013) in their deliberate efforts to reflect and act on their own personal challenges as a white male leader to develop the knowledge and ability to take risks and "put themselves out there" by challenging other white people to do the same (Gallardo, p. 7).

Ways of Being/Ways of Doing

The strategies used by study participants to promote diversity, equity and social justice also support Chavez's (2013) theory of leadership behavior and transformational change. They often described an awareness of the importance of personal qualities and characteristics that reflected Chavez's concept of *ways of being* based in the "inherent qualities of individuals" such as principles, values, beliefs, sense of responsibility, hope, strength and courage (Chavez, 2013, p. 9). In addition, study participants reported personal activities similar to the strategies and characteristics identified by Chavez: introspection; observation and learning to develop the key internal qualities of an inclusive leader; an internal sense of responsibility for others; and a desire to lead change for social justice based in early identity and life experiences.

Study participants also supported the parallel concept of *ways of doing* (Chavez, 2013) that focuses on externally oriented activities such as observation, learning from life experiences, and interactions and activities with, toward and for others. Participants used these activities to develop personal awareness and understanding of diversity, equity and social justice issues, and then converted their learning into actions and practices aimed at achieving transformational change in their institution and/or community. In addition, many study participants reflected Chavez's core principle of a "foundation of transformation" (p. 28) that purposefully combines the internal process to achieve transformation of self with external efforts to transform others, in part through the integration of "being and doing" in daily practices and actions by a leader on behalf of others (p. 35).

It is important to note that the efforts and accounts of study participants also reflected Chavez's (2013) description of the critical qualities necessary for successful leadership of transformational change for social justice: developing a personal sense of responsibility for others; having a personal desire to lead change for social justice; a commitment to transforming one's self and others; a willingness to engage in life experiences, learning activities and personal reflection; and engaging in conscious efforts to acquire the necessary skills, practices and strategies to achieve transformational change. This list of critical qualities essentially provides a summary description of the three-stage process to become an inclusive white male leader that begins with key life experiences, moves through personal growth and transformation, and culminates in actions to bring about positive change for others.

Summary of Relevant Action Theories

At the most practical level, study data consistently support Kezar's (2008) theory of organizational action to implement change for diversity issues. The study participants regularly reported using existing organizational processes and structures such as planning efforts, mission focus, organizational structure and positional authority to initiate, support and execute diversity efforts. In particular, participants focused on using hiring opportunities as a vehicle to introduce and implement changes to promote diversity, equity and inclusion within their institution.

On a broader level, study participants also described actions and strategies that combine personal and interpersonal theory elements. They reported various ways of using their personal identity and status (Kendall, 2006; Pinterits et al, 2009) and corresponding awareness and understanding of identity and status issues to position

themselves to initiate, support or leverage diversity efforts. The study data also document a consistent emphasis on interactions with others (Barlas et al, 2012; Kendall, 2006) as a key strategy to develop and execute actions for diversity, equity and social justice.

The most significant strategies and actions reported by study participants relate directly to theories on leadership of transformational change. Participants often reported deliberately striving to convey a vision of a more diverse, equitable and inclusive institution to inspire and motivate their campus community (Bryson, 1995). A majority of participants also described strategies and actions aimed at personal change as well as cultural transformation of their institution (Chavez, 2013; Gallardo, 2013; Kezar & Eckel, 2008). This dual focus indicates a critical connection between changes in self and a leader's interest in achieving lasting cultural change within his institution.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion

Overall, study findings can be broken down into internal or personal factors, and external or environmental factors. These factors encompass the three research questions: What kind of life experiences influence inclusive white male leaders to become involved in diversity, equity and social justice work? What types of strategies and activities help inclusive white male leaders develop awareness and understanding of how identity, race and privilege relate to their leadership behavior and practices? What strategies and actions do inclusive white male leaders employ to address diversity, equity and social justice issues?

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the study findings to answer these questions. To begin with, the accounts of study participants reflect the proposed three-stage process of development for inclusive white male leaders (IWMLs) that begins with motivation from life experiences to become interested and engaged in diversity issues, advances through a stage of developing greater awareness and understanding of diversity, and ultimately inspires action to address issues of discrimination, inequity, exclusion and injustice. It is also evident that this process involves an ongoing interplay of internal and external influences, strategies and objectives that provide the framework for IWML behavior and practices.

The initial motivation to engage in diversity issues comes from external influences – certain events, influences and interactions attract the attention of a white male and inspire a curiosity and interest in diversity issues. These influences in turn initiate the development of an internal system of personal beliefs and principles that

become the primary motivational driver and lead to the second stage of development focused on developing greater understanding of diversity issues. The aspiring inclusive leader then begins a conscious process of exploring diversity issues and how they relate to those issues as a white male. The leaders look inward to reflect on their own experiences, thoughts and feelings related to diversity and they turn outward to seek interactions with others to gain added insight through new learning experiences and to gather information from research and data on diversity issues.

Study data also show that motivation for a white male leader to become actively engaged in diversity work is a combination of internal and external, and qualitative and quantitative factors. For some participants in the study, their motivation is primarily intellectual and rational, driven largely by data gathered from research, reports, and factual evidence that reveal issues of concern and show a need for attention and action. For many participants, subjective drivers of emotion, empathy and compassion for diverse others inspire their diversity engagement. With most of the study participants, both types of drivers motivate their diversity work, with personal passion and commitment to diversity supported by objective data.

For those white males who become inclusive leaders, they develop enough awareness, concern and confidence to convert their internal principles, beliefs and concerns into external action aimed at their institution, community and people in those settings. Two key forces drive these actions: internally, a personal desire to act in support of people from under-represented and non-privileged populations, and externally, a sense of professional responsibility linked to the duties and expectations of their leadership role to act in support of the needs and interests of all people on the campus and

in the community. The study findings also show that the actions of inclusive leaders involve internal and external elements. They consciously strive to develop a sincere and active personal commitment to diversity, equity and social justice. At the same time, they also deliberately work to support and develop activities and initiatives that influence others to engage in a similar process of personal exploration and growth and encourage support to address inequity and injustice in their institution and community. The overall process involves a recurring cycle of reflection, learning and action that takes place at personal, professional and institutional levels. This ongoing process of experiencing and acting, reflecting and learning, captures the key elements of IWML development: external influences and life experiences are activated by reflection and interactions with others to produce learning, awareness and commitment that inspires action to bring about change to address diversity, equity and social justice issues.

The study also confirms existing research that shows life experiences, especially interactions with people from different backgrounds and racial and ethnic groups, are critical to developing the compassion and empathy for oppressed and marginalized people necessary to become actively involved in diversity, equity and social justice work (Kendall, 2006). The study findings also show that IWMLs develop evolving identities or self-schemas as inclusive individuals through selective reflection on life experiences and interactions with others, especially others who are different from them (Markus, 1983). The combination of experience and reflection sensitizes these leaders to diversity issues and positions them to develop an evolving personal concern for issues like racism, equity, privilege and social justice. In most cases, the key life experiences include incidents involving some form of minority experience that provides a sense of initial

prompted identity as a white person and/or white male typically brought about through interactions with diverse others (Kendall, 2006; McKinney, 2005). These external experiences initiate an internal awareness of identity difference, and the emotional and personal impact of the experiences – on self and/or on others – creates understanding that leads to compassion and empathy. In many instances, information from research reinforces the growing awareness and concern and a leader ultimately develops a sense of commitment and responsibility to act to address issues and injustices – and begin the process of becoming an inclusive leader.

For white males who experience the transformation to a new IWML identity, it is evident their engagement in this change process is dependent in part on the impact of significant life influences and events that affected the individual's perception of self and others (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Kendall, 2006; McKinney, 2005). These key experiences create a prompted sense of racial identity – often simply viewed in terms of being different from others – that creates disruption by challenging the individual's existing view of self and the world in relationship to others and inspiring reflection on the meaning of the experiences. It is significant to note that these types of experiences only motivate some white males to become IWMLs, and only some individuals choose to reflect deeply enough to produce learning from their experiences and change their self-schema.

The study data also indicate that the timing of life events is a key factor in the degree of impact on an individual (Borstein, 1989; Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Many study participants report key experiences that affected their awareness and understanding of race, identity and privilege during their youth, high school and college years and in the

early stages of their careers. These life stages are periods when participants may have been more sensitive or vulnerable to influences, likely before a sense of self and identity is fully formed and when a person may be more anxious or uncertain in the context of specific challenging situations. It is reasonable to interpret the study findings to indicate that challenges to identity, instances of racism, or a prompted identity of whiteness, for example, during the stages of life when a person is more vulnerable for a variety of reasons, could be key factors in influencing an identity shift toward a more racially aware and inclusive sense of self. It is also important to note that these types of experiences and the potential for significant impact may be more likely to occur during life stages when a person finds himself in a new, very different setting and social context with significant academic, career or personal challenges.

The study data and existing research suggest a number of reasons why this change toward inclusiveness occurs with some white males. It is quite possible that intangible factors unique to the personality and psyche of each white male in part determine if an individual engages in the transformation process. The type of life influences, as well as the degree of impact, duration and timing of key influences, may also play a part in why a white male is influenced enough to begin a journey toward inclusiveness. Life circumstances may also be a key factor, with opportunities to change and conditions requiring change possibly arising at key sensitive points to influence an individual on his career path.

The decision to invest time and energy to engage in the process of becoming an inclusive leader involves a combination of outside influences and personal choice. Outside influences may involve events and experiences that motivate interest in diversity,

equity and social justice issues, or they could be in the form of demands and expectations presented by life experiences and professional responsibilities. In the end**,** the decision to commit to inclusiveness is a personal choice that each leader makes for his own reasons. Just as the study participants learned to not assume that all members of an under-represented or marginalized population group share a similar life experience, each president in this study experienced his own unique life journey.

What is common to all of their journeys is the notion that each leader experienced his own series of 'tipping points' over the course of his life, a sequence of events and experiences that planted and fertilized the seeds of awareness and interest in diversity issues. These leaders did not suddenly become sensitized to behave as inclusive leaders. They gradually evolved to that point, in most cases by responding to experiences, issues and opportunities along the way that led them to their current state. A series of experiential learning events, marked by increasingly deliberate and more frequent reflection and learning efforts by each leader, ultimately developed an identity and sense of self as an inclusive white male leader.

An additional conclusion from the study involves actions used by study participants to successfully promote and support diversity issues, with a number of strategies reported by participants presenting some common approaches to diversity work. Echoing the theme of a combination of internal and external approaches, participants focused their diversity efforts on internally oriented efforts aimed at personal behavior as committed inclusive leaders, and externally oriented efforts directed at influencing others and creating visible, impactful change within their institution and in the community. In most cases, these efforts are designed with two purposes in mind: to

implement change within the existing institutional framework and processes, and to provide learning experiences for others to help them find their own path of awareness, reflection and learning to discover the importance of diversity and recognize the need to address issues of equity, inclusion and social justice. The study participants did not tell people what to think or feel about diversity; they worked to develop ways to help people learn and grow through experiences with diversity. In addition, they did not take on diversity work as a solo effort – they focused on collaborative engagement with others, often working side by side or behind the scenes more often than acting as an executive leader at the top of the hierarchy. In particular, collective efforts with their executive team were also critically important to success with diversity efforts, as well as with key leaders in the community.

The study findings also show that the role of an inclusive white male leader is not for the timid or weak of heart. The study participants indicate that successful IWMLs must be willing to speak up, accept criticism and take risks. They often allow themselves to be vulnerable with others and ask difficult questions, share fears and uncertainties, and deliberately put themselves in situations where they are a minority presence and may not be viewed as the most knowledgeable and confident person in the room.

The study also reveals that the study participants consistently focus their work on others more than on their self, demonstrating a form of servant leadership. Their interest in diversity is often aimed at understanding the experiences and needs of others, with their own personal growth from that learning experience occurring as a result of the effort to engage and support diverse others. An emphasis on others is also evident in the fact that the study findings do not reveal significant support for possible selves theory

(Markus & Nurius, 1986) – instead of focusing on developing their own future sense of self, the participants' interests largely focus on helping others discover their own form of future possible selves through education, or helping their institution and community achieve a potential future state as a more inclusive, accessible and welcoming place for everyone.

It is interesting to note that this focus on others may be related to how the majority of participants view identity and privilege. They often focused more on understanding the identities and differences of others than on recognizing their own unique aspects of identity and experience that make them different from others. In addition, participants frequently framed the issue of privilege in terms of how it affects others who are not white males rather than considering how privilege may have played an active and impactful role in their own life, career success and current leadership role – even to the extent that privilege allowed them the choice and opportunity to develop into and act as an inclusive leader. While this condition may reveal some resistance to acknowledging the realities and impact of their whiteness and the impact of privilege on their life and career, it is also possible that this perspective results from a selflessness that stems from a servant leadership philosophy. Their view of privilege may also be related to the fact that many of the study participants are from an older generation of leaders who may have had less exposure to white privilege theory in their education and professional development, and the fact that many of them experienced their critical years of identity development during a time when white privilege theory was not as widely considered or understood by many white people.

A final conclusion from the study relates to the research by Chavez (2013). The most passionate study participants reflect aspects of transformational leadership described by Chavez, with an emphasis on leadership of diversity efforts involving internal qualities of "ways of being" and external aspects of "ways of doing". Chavez also highlighted the critical significance of a "foundation of transformation" (p. 28) that combines a leader's focused efforts on changes in self with a parallel change effort aimed at others as well as changes in institutional culture. Transformation of self and changes in others and the institution are inseparable, with the leader and the campus community experiencing a shared journey of growth and change to achieve increased diversity, equity and inclusion. In addition, Chavez's theory of successful transformational leadership for social justice also captures the essence of the three-stage process of IWML development supported by the study findings: a starting point in key life experiences leads to a process of personal transformation that culminates in collaborative action to bring about positive change to promote diversity, equity and social justice.

Significance of the Findings

Findings from this study have significance in terms of potential application to leadership of diversity efforts by white males and as potential strategies to develop and recruit inclusive white male leaders. The study findings can also help current white male leaders in higher education work toward becoming successful inclusive leaders. The data on motivation and experiential learning can help white males recognize and reflect on key life experiences to create meaning and learning that will help them develop greater awareness of racial and ethnic identities for themselves as well as others. The strategies

used by study participants also provide ‘best practices’ that other white male leaders can employ to build awareness and understanding of diversity issues.

While each leader’s journey may be as unique as the path of an adventurer exploring a wilderness, the study identifies a common course of development based in key life experiences during critical life stages when individuals are often most susceptible to influence and change. In addition, the study provides a common set of activities that encourage learning and growth from life experiences, identifying potential activities to employ as intentional efforts by white males working to become inclusive leaders. The study also provides some successful strategies to convert experiential learning and understanding into action to support and promote diversity, possibly providing a guide to develop and carry out diversity initiatives as a white male.

Considering that study participants openly express concern about a lack of inclusive white male role models, this study also provides a potential pool of inclusive role models, albeit in a collective and anonymous format. This study could also be used to identify, recruit and develop inclusive white male leaders. The study findings provide reference material that identifies desired characteristics and relevant experience or qualifications of candidates for executive positions as well as material for interview questions. The study also can inform professional development efforts for current administrators or as course material for students preparing for a career in higher education administration.

Finally, this study is significant in that it provides reason for optimism about the future of higher education and our potential to successfully address critical issues of racism, inequity, exclusion and injustice on our college campuses. This study shows that

there are white male leaders who "get it", individuals who are committed to taking on the task to become a more aware, more engaged and more inclusive leader. This study also shows that it is possible for a white male leader to have significant impact on diversity efforts – not in spite of his race and gender status, but in part because of what his identity and experience contributes to the effort to achieve a more equitable and inclusive world with open access to education and opportunity.

Further Research

While this study has a number of limitations that affect its application, those limitations also present opportunities for further study. The study included participants from a mix of institutional types and locations; focusing on one geographic region or type of higher education institution could yield more specific findings unique to a specific context. There is also an opportunity to explore the state of each leader's campus and community in terms of its demographic and cultural diversity and experiences with critical issues of diversity, equity and social justice issues. There may be a connection between a white male leader's progression and behavior toward becoming an inclusive leader and the degree to which the institutional and social context of their campus acts as a significant influence on a leader's attention to diversity, equity and social justice issues.

In addition, the anonymous nature of this study limits the material extracted from study data, as confidentiality required selective editing of the study data to protect the identity of participants. An open study that identified each participant and included specific aspects of the characteristics of their life journey and unique elements of their institution would not only offer more material to consider, it could also provide an opportunity to present the study participants as recognized role models. Restricted data

collection also limits this study, as the primary data came from only one interview with each participant that ranged from forty-five minutes to two hours in length. It is possible that a longer interview or several interviews over a period of time could have produced more insight by allowing time for reflection by the participants and more in-depth discussion of the issues. The fact that each participant had the opportunity to review the interview transcript and summary findings does provide some degree of reliability and trustworthiness, as well as the fact that they made very few changes or corrections upon these reviews.

Additional research could also focus on the types of life experiences that influence the development of inclusive white male leaders. Life experiences of IMWLs could be examined more closely in terms of the presence and impact of crucible, turning point or epiphany experiences (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Kendall, 2006; McKinney, 2005). The six different types of significant life events (Ligon et al, 2008) that impact leader behavior could also be applied to a deeper examination of the life experiences of IMWLs. Further study in this area could provide more insight into specific types of events that have greater or more lasting impact on leadership behavior and practices in regard to engagement in diversity, equity and social justice issues.

A number of specific questions and issues raised by this study merit further exploration. A good share of the study participants report that their positional identity appears to be more important to others than their identity as a white male - an intriguing idea that warrants further study. To what degree is this true of presidents and chancellors in higher education? In what instances does the personal identity of a president become an issue, and why? At what point in the hierarchy of administrative positions does

personal identity become less important and positional identity becomes more important? Given the over-representation of white men in senior leadership positions in higher education, can and should identity and position be separated?

In addition, many of the study participants emphasized that they consciously strive to not let personal identity issues such as race influence their hiring decisions – they often asserted that they make a deliberate point to hire the best candidate regardless of diversity or equity considerations. Since this philosophy challenges the views of many affirmative action advocates and programs, it would be interesting to explore this principle and practice further with these study participants and/or with new additional participants. Is this a common view and practice among a majority of white male leaders, and how do they justify this practice when hiring is identified as a key opportunity to introduce more diversity to their institution? How do they align that practice with their expressed interest in working to achieve equity for non-privileged and under-represented groups in terms of access to career advancement and leadership opportunities? Also, how do they employ mentoring strategies to help position and prepare individuals from under-represented groups to become more qualified for advancement?

It is also intriguing to consider the fact that white privilege is not an active concern or focus for many of the study participants. Why is this the case? To what degree is that view due to the age and background of the participants, or their academic discipline, or the setting and circumstances of their leadership position? For example, further study could focus on comparing views, behaviors and practices of white male leaders from different age groups or different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Do the views of the study participants simply reflect a lack of awareness of white

privilege theory, or is it the result of a deliberate decision to focus on a broader definition of privilege in general – and if so, why, and what does that mean? To what degree might a deliberate broader view of privilege by white male leaders reflect concerns of white privilege theory that recognition and awareness of privilege is a choice of white males, a luxury and benefit of their privileged status that actually supports demands for greater attention to white privilege?

Another issue to explore further involves the personality type of individual white male leaders. Given the evidence that active engagement with others on and off campus is a key feature of inclusive white male leaders, is an individual with an extroverted personality likely to be a more successful inclusive white male leader than an introverted individual? How does the traditional view of charisma as a critical leadership trait figure into this question? Risk taking is also a feature of many of the study participants. Does this study suggest that a risk-averse individual is less likely to become a successful inclusive white male leader?

There is also an opportunity for a specific follow-up study involving these same participants. One approach could involve interviews with members of their campus community to explore how others view each study participant. Do the views of people from their campus and community support the perceptions and intentions of each leader, or do others view the leader's diversity work in a different or more critical light? A new set of questions could also be developed that relate to the initial study for use in a second interview with participants after they have read the findings from this study and had time to reflect on their thoughts and reactions to my observations and conclusions. Would a second round of interviews produce any changes or conflicting views among the study

participants in comparison to the first interviews? Would the experience of participating in the study and reflecting on the study outcomes produce any changes in their views and behavior related to their thoughts on identity, race, privilege, equity and diversity?

Closing Comments

I find myself at an intriguing point in comparison to my thinking when I began this study. I initially expected that this study would identify some type of model for how a white male like me can become an inclusive leader. While this study has documented a number of common aspects in the life experiences and leadership practices of the participants in this study, I am impressed with the unique nature of the personal journey of each participant that brought them to the point of successfully serving as an inclusive white male leader. Just as some participants pointed out that they have learned to not assume there is a common experience or perspective of individuals from a specific racial, ethnic or social group, the same is true for white male leaders in higher education. Even among this pool of recognized advocates for diversity, equity and social justice, the study data reveal a range of views and perspectives on key issues like white privilege and leadership roles, for example. In addition, this study has helped me view my own personal identity as less of a barrier to diversity work. The participants in this study have demonstrated how their white male status can serve as an asset and advantage in their diversity work, and how positional authority and status can outweigh or offset challenges of their personal identity status in many instances. This study has helped me better understand the experiences, challenges and opportunities of white male leaders in doing their part to ensure a fair and just world in higher education. Most important and even a bit surprising to me, I find myself more comfortable, confident and inspired to continue

to strive to make my own contributions to address diversity, equity and social justice issues in my institution and community.

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Appendix A

CONSENT FORM

White Male Leaders in Higher Education

As an executive administrator for a higher education institution, you are invited to participate in a research study exploring the development of awareness of race and privilege for white male leaders in higher education. I am providing you with this consent form to inform you about the study and allow you to consider any questions before you agree to participate in the study.

Background Information:

This study is being conducted by: Craig Johnson, Ed.D. candidate in Higher Education in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. The purpose of this study is to explore how life experiences may have influenced involvement of white male higher education leaders in diversity initiatives and/or racial or social justice activities, and what types of activities and strategies are used by inclusive white male leaders to develop their understanding of identity, race and privilege and convert that understanding into leadership actions for their institution. The outcomes of the study will identify effective strategies for other white male leaders in higher education and provide insight for institutions to inform their efforts to recruit and develop future inclusive white male leaders.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to agree to the following conditions:

- Participate in a 1-2 hour interview with me at your convenience – in-person or via phone – on a date between January 1, 2016 and February 15, 2016. It is possible to schedule the interview session in two parts, but a single session is preferred if possible. With your permission, the interview session(s) will be audio taped.
- Allow me to use your interview responses in my dissertation, with the understanding that your name and all identifying information will be masked to your satisfaction.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

Potential risks of participating in this study include: the personal focus of this study may involve responses to interview questions that could lead to self-disclosure. You have the option to not answer any question posed during the interview. In addition, confidentiality of your responses and identity is assured. Pseudonyms for you and your institution will be used in the study document to ensure confidentiality. To ensure accuracy, you will also be will be given a summary and interpretive analysis of your interview responses to allow you the opportunity to correct or clarify any of your responses to the interview questions.

Possible benefits to participation include: as a study participant, you may benefit from personal reflection and insight through the dialogue involved in the interview process. Review of the interview summary and analysis may also provide opportunity for personal growth as well. You will also have the potential benefit of sharing your personal story and individual strategies to help other white male leaders in their efforts to effectively lead their colleges and universities in diversity initiatives and racial or social justice activities.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for your participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

The notes and audio recording of the interview will be held in a secure physical location in a locked file in my work office, with confidentiality and privacy maintained during and after execution of the study. In the dissertation content and any possible subsequent publication or presentation of the study, your identity will remain confidential through use of pseudonyms for you and your institution. Upon completion of the study, the interview recording(s) will be destroyed. Study data will also be encrypted for security measures according to current University policy for protection of confidentiality.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to not answer any questions and you may withdraw from the study and the interview process at any time.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Craig Johnson.

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact the researcher at 507-258-0229 or john2530@umn.edu.

Advisor's Name/Phone: Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, 612-624-1006

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Interview Protocol and Questions

Research Questions:

- What unique experiences in the life of IWMLs have influenced their decision to become actively involved in leadership efforts for diversity issues and racial and social justice work?
- How do IWMLs consciously develop a greater understanding of their personal identity and place in the world in relationship to others, especially in regard to challenges of identity, race and privilege?
- How do IWMLs convert personal awareness and understanding of identity, race and privilege into action to initiate and lead change in their institution and/or community to promote diversity and address racial and social justice issues?

Interview Protocol:

Interviews will be conducted in-person whenever possible, or by phone or skype when necessary. Participants will receive a copy of the interview questions (excluding the follow-up prompt questions described below) to help them prepare for the interview; they will be able to exclude any questions from the interview and they will be able to expand on the focus of each question as they see fit. The questions are intended to solicit reflection by each participant to encourage them to share their personal life story as well as their goals, ambitions and aspirations and to inspire reflection on their leadership role, practices and behavior related to diversity, race and privilege issues.

Interview comments will be recorded and extensive notes will be taken during the interview. Follow-up prompts described below will be used as needed to help each participant fully respond to each question, or to help clarify the intent of each question. A verbatim transcript of the interview will be transcribed and provided to each participant to review and amend as they choose. In addition, a summary and analysis of the interview will be shared with each participant to allow them to correct or amend the material to ensure that it accurately reflects their experience and responses.

Interview Questions:

1. You have been recruited for this study because of your involvement in diversity and inclusion initiatives and/or because you were recommended for this study as an inclusive white male leader in higher education. Have you consciously worked to develop that type of identity as a higher education leader? If so, why?

   Possible follow-up prompts as needed:
   - What aspects of your leadership work may be most responsible for your reputation as an inclusive white male leader in higher education?
   - How important is it to you to establish a legacy of leadership work for diversity and inclusion?

2. How would you describe your personal life and career journey that has led you to become involved in diversity and inclusion efforts?

   Possible follow-up prompts as needed:
   - Have you consciously developed that career path, or have you primarily responded to experiences and opportunities in your life as they occurred?
   - Look ahead - what do you envision for your future life and career path?
   - How does that future view influence your current behavior and actions as President?

3. Please describe any specific events, experiences or people in your life that have played a part in developing your awareness of diversity or race issues.

   Possible follow-up prompts:

   - How did those experiences affect you at the time?
   - Was the impact of those experiences greater or different later on in your life? If so, how and why?
   - How have those life experiences influenced your current leadership style and practices?

4. When did you first become aware of social differences related to race or gender? How did that awareness come about, and how did it affect you at the time?

   Possible follow-up prompts as needed:
   - When and how did you first acknowledge an identity as a white person? As a white male?
   - When and how did you first become aware of white privilege? What was your response or reaction to that initial recognition?
   - How has your understanding of race, gender and privilege influenced your behavior and practices as a higher education leader?

5. What drives your current leadership work to promote diversity and inclusion or work for racial or social justice in your institution or community?

   Possible follow-up prompts as needed:
   - To what extent is your work driven by a view of these issues as:
     - a strategic necessity for your institution?
     - a personal commitment for you as an individual person?
     - a sense of moral or social obligation as a presidential leader?
     - other?

6. As President, what role do you play in diversity and inclusion initiatives in your institution or community?

   Possible follow-up prompts as needed:

- Do you feel it is important for a president to be actively engaged in diversity issues? If so, why? If not, why not?
- To what extent do you act as a *facilitator*, a *champion*, and/or a *change agent* for diversity issues and race relations in your institution or community?
- Are you involved in diversity and inclusion activities in the external community outside of your institution? Why or why not?

7. How does your personal commitment to recognize and understand diversity, race and privilege issues align with the execution of your leadership role and responsibilities as President of your institution?

   Possible follow-up prompts as needed:
   - To what extent do your personal interests in diversity and inclusion issues influence your vision of the future state for your institution?
   - Do you encourage members of your leadership team or your campus community to initiate their own individual effort to understand race and privilege issues? If not, why not?
   - If so, what tactics or strategies have you used to encourage or support that type of personal growth effort?

8. As a white male, how have you established credibility to support your efforts for diversity and inclusion?

   Possible follow-up prompts as needed:
   - Is your status as a white male an asset or a liability in your efforts?
   - How would you respond to a view that a white male cannot effectively understand the impact of racism or discrimination because you have not directly experienced oppression due to your visible identity?
   - What strategies have you used to develop an understanding of the experiences and perceptions of people with identities that are different from you?
   - To what extent are your strategies individual or introspective activities versus inter-personal or group activities? Can you provide examples?

9. What core beliefs or principles guide your work for diversity and inclusion?

   Possible follow-up prompts as needed:
   - What is your view of a color-blind versus racially cognizant approach to diversity and race relations?
   - How is your view of this issue reflected in your leadership behavior and practices as president of your institution?

10. Do you actively seek to engage others in discussions of identity, race and privilege issues within your campus or community? If so, why? If not, why not?

Possible follow-up prompts as needed:

- How do you engage in these discussions with other white people? With non-privileged people and people of color?
- How do you discuss race and privilege with white people who are resistant to considering these issues?
- How has dialogue or interactions with non-privileged people impacted your sense of your personal identity and influenced your leadership practices and behavior?

11. What kind of support system do you have to encourage your diversity and inclusion efforts or help you persist in the face of challenges?

Possible follow-up prompts as needed:

- Do you have any support resources within your leadership team or campus community?
- Do you have any support resources within your circle of professional colleagues beyond the campus? Within the local community?
- Do you have any key mentors for support in your personal life?
- How important are these support resources to your persistence and success in your work for diversity and inclusion?

12. What do you think has been most critical to the success of your diversity and inclusion efforts?

Possible follow-up prompts as needed:

- To what degree do you think we can we teach a white male to become an inclusive leader, versus needing critical life experiences to shape understanding of race and privilege?
- Do you have any advice for white males who seek to become effective leaders for diversity and inclusion issues in higher education?
- Can you suggest any other white male presidents who are actively engaged in diversity and inclusion work to consider for my study?

13. Do you have any other comments to share that will help me understand your personal journey to become an inclusive white male leader in higher education?